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BISHOP OF CREMONA

TRANSLATED BY
Right Rev. Thomas S. Byrne, D.D.
BISHOP OF NASHVILLE

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OR

DISCOURSES FOR ALL THE GREAT FEASTS OF THE YEAR, EXCEPT THOSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

BY THE

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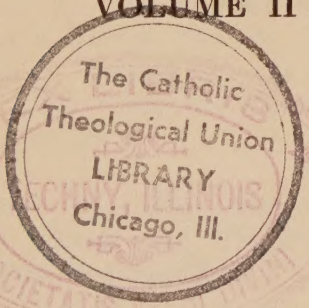

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO

BENZIGER BROTHERS

PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE | PUBLISHERS OF BENZIGER'S MAGAZINE

1910

Nihil Obstat.

26
15326

THOMAS B. COTTER,
Censor Librorum.

Imprimatur.

✠ JOHN M. FARLEY,
Archbishop of New York.

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 7, 1910.

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Easter

CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES

DISCOURSE I

The Resurrection of Christ and Human Reason

In our august religion there is one solemn fact that stands out conspicuously above all others, that is the very culmination of the life of Christ, that throws a flood of light upon His mission, that puts the seal upon His entire work and lights up His countenance with the infinite splendors of His divinity, and that is, as you have divined, the fact of His resurrection, which the Church to-day commemorates and celebrates with all the pomp of her sacred ritual and with all the tumultuous gladness of her great heart. Our entire religion, our entire faith, rests, as upon a foundation stone, upon the single fact that *Jesus Christ is God.* All the numerous and manifold proofs of the divinity of Jesus Christ are so linked together, so interwoven one with the other, that they all converge toward, all center in, the one great fact of the Resurrection. This is the miracle of miracles, and of all the proofs of His divinity it is the greatest. If this fact will not bear up against the assaults of human reason and of unbelief the entire edifice

of our faith will come tumbling down; but if it stands unshaken in spite of the onslaughts of its enemies, then with it and because of it the great work of Christ, the Church, will stand erect and firm, and together with her will Christ's teachings be preserved.

This is why the apostles, from the very first day on which they began to preach Christ's Gospel, appealed to the miracle of His resurrection. This is why the great apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, said: "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have given testimony against God that He hath raised up Christ. And if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins—and we are of all men the most miserable."[1]

This great fact, this miracle of the Resurrection, has been for nineteen hundred years, from the day it was first preached down to the present, a mark for the most savage and rancorous attacks of unbelief. After so many and such persistent assaults and after having been so often and so signally defeated, it should seem that unbelievers would learn wisdom, confess themselves beaten, and cease from their attacks. But this they have not done; modern unbelievers, like the giants in

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 14. 15, 17, 49.

the fable, continue the conflict and hope to scale heaven and pull the Son of God Himself from His throne. There they are, all of them, fussy and busy, attacking the foundation of His divinity, the miracle of the Resurrection; to the old implements of warfare they have added new ones, and they are straining every nerve to shake this foundation and overturn it. But they are like children hammering away at the granite base of the proudest peak of the Alps in the belief that they shall pull it down.

It is, my friends, sad and distressing to think that after so many centuries we are obliged to take up and refurbish the weapons used by the first apologists to defend the chief fact and principal dogma of our faith. But if it must be done, we shall not shrink from it. Our faith has no fear either of the hidden snares or of the open assaults of unbelievers, ancient or modern, no matter whence they come. Even within the domain of pure reason and with the arms that reason supplies it faces its enemies boldly, confidently, willingly, and ready for combat.

The fact upon which the divinity of Christ preeminently rests is His resurrection. This fact unbelievers deny; this fact the Church affirms, and on this day throughout the length and breadth of the world she sings these words: *"The Lord is risen indeed."* My purpose is to prove this fact,

this miracle, by the most rigorous reasoning, by arguments, note well, drawn not from faith, but from reason. Ye, who are steadfast in the Faith, will have that faith strengthened; and if there be among you those who have strayed from the Faith, or in whom it is weak, you will see and be convinced that the fundamental fact of our religion does not dread the light of the most rigorous discussion and of the most searching criticism, and that no greater favor can be done it than to cite it to judgment. The subject is a vast one and I beg you to give me your attention, and, if need be, your patience.

Is Jesus Christ truly risen? Can this be demonstrated from reason alone? I affirm that both of these statements are true, and you will judge whether or not I make my affirmation good.

The fact or the miracle we are about to examine contains two parts, inseparable yet distinct, namely, the death and the resurrection of Christ, and there could be no resurrection if there had not been an antecedent death. This needs no proof.

Now the death and the resurrection are two facts, and like all facts they can be proven by testimony. No one, of course, will ask metaphysical or mathematical proofs; the subject does not admit of such proofs. And no one believes that the certainty of facts is inferior to the cer-

tainty of mathematical proofs. Who doubts that the Romans were defeated at Cannae, or that Cæsar was murdered, or that Napoleon died on the island of St. Helena? No one. And why, and on what grounds, do we hold these facts to be absolutely certain? Were we witnesses of them? No. Men worthy of belief attest them, and that is sufficient; our certainty of them is unshaken. But what conditions do we demand before we give full faith to witnesses who affirm any fact whatever? Two conditions are necessary, and these two are abundant; namely, that the witnesses are not themselves deceived and that they do not wish to deceive others; in other words, we demand that they shall know what they state to be true, and that they shall be honest and sincere. Given these two essential conditions, their testimony can not be rejected, and the certainty derived from such testimony is absolute. On the testimony of two or three witnesses, in whom these two characteristics are found, a court would be justified in condemning a criminal to imprisonment for life or even to death. Can greater certainty be had?

And now for our argument. Here are two facts, the death and the resurrection of Christ; they are two external facts that fall under the dominion of the senses, and that, in consequence, can be proved only by the testimony of men worthy of being believed. Have we such men? Yes, and men such

both in number and character that their testimony could not possibly be more authoritative. And first of all let us establish the fact that Christ was really dead.

We have four writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, of four distinct books, known as the Gospels, all four living at the time the fact, which they record, took place; and two of them witnessed what they narrate. All four of them, after narrating the sufferings of Christ, and His crucifixion, simply say: "*He gave up the ghost.*" Other witnesses, Peter, Paul, and James, repeat the same thing in their Letters; and besides them, all those who lived with Christ and were His followers bear witness either directly or indirectly to His death. Critics and scientific men are quite content with the authority of Plato and Cicero, of Tacitus and Suetonius to be certain of the death of Socrates and Cæsar, of Caligula and Claudius, and to be certain of the death of Christ why are they not satisfied with the testimony of His biographers and of contemporary writers and historians?

The Jews, the Scribes, the Pharisees, the priests, the elders, and all that mighty throng that followed Him out to Calvary and watched Him intently, counting with savage glee the hours and almost the minutes of His agony, were all witnesses to the death of Christ. It was the vigil of

the Pasch, the greatest feast of Israel, and an enormous crowd had come up to Jerusalem from every corner of Palestine. The name of Jesus, the great prophet, the wonder-worker, ran from mouth to mouth, and we can fancy how that mob rushed to Calvary the moment it was known that Jesus was to be nailed to the cross. Among that mob, and likely about the cross upon which Jesus was in His agony, without doubt stood His implacable enemies, rejoicing in their triumph and impatiently awaiting the last breath of the victim whom they hated. Can we for a moment doubt, that, mindful of His repeated promise, "I will rise again," they did not make sure of His death?

Again: The night before He was crucified His heart was so cruelly wrenched that He fell in a swoon and sweated blood; it was a night of horrors; He was abandoned, denied, betrayed by His own and left to the mercy of a brutal soldiery, who wrought every indignity upon Him. The next morning He was barbarously scourged, crowned with thorns, dragged up the hill of Calvary, nailed to the cross, and thus mangled and bloody, exposed to air and sun, He was devoured by a raging fever and suffered nameless agonies of soul, without a gleam of comfort of any kind. He was all bruised and lacerated, His whole body was one wound and it seemed impossible for Him to survive these inflictions. The wonder is that, after

enduring such anguish and such savage torture, He could have lived three hours on the cross. He bowed His head, He breathed His last agonizing breath, His body relaxed, a deathly pallor settled upon His countenance, and the gazing multitude cried out: *"He is dead."*

The great feast was at hand and the bodies of those who had been executed must be removed. The executioners came to discharge their gruesome office, and seeing the two thieves who had been crucified by the side of Jesus still alive, according to the barbarous usage of that age they broke their legs with a club and despatched them. Coming to Jesus and seeing Him already dead, they did not break His legs, but one of them, to make sure that there was no mistake about His being dead, drove a spear into His breast, which must have rent His heart asunder.

Shortly after a disciple of Jesus asked His body of Pilate for burial, and Pilate, before granting the request, called the centurion who had commanded the detachment of soldiers present at the crucifixion, and being assured by him that Jesus was really dead, gave the required permission.

Again: At nightfall the body of Jesus was taken down from the cross, wrapped in clean linen with a mixture of a hundred-weight of myrrh and aloes, after the manner of the Jews, and laid in a new sepulcher, hewn out of the rock; the sepul-

cher was closed and a big stone rolled against the door, and then it was sealed by the Jews themselves and a guard placed about it for three days, this being the period within which Jesus had promised to rise again.

Now, my friends, let us take a common-sense view of things, and let us suppose that Jesus was not really dead, that His seeming death was a swoon, a syncope, or a feigned death; could He, I ask, have possibly survived being shut up in a sepulcher, wrapped in a winding-sheet, in an atmosphere of myrrh and aloes, without air and without relief or any sort of care? Let us speak frankly and avow that, if He were not already really dead, all this would certainly have killed Him.

Finally, bear in mind that the Jews never for a moment doubted that Jesus was really dead, for this would have been the strongest possible argument against the miracle of the Resurrection; on the contrary they had recourse, as we shall see, to the ridiculous expedient of saying that the apostles had stolen away the body and had then lied about it. Could there be a more evident proof that it was impossible to deny that Jesus was really dead?[1]

[1]A few rationalists have attempted to deny the reality of the death of Christ, but their arguments and hypotheses do not deserve serious consideration. Renan admits it as quite certain and confines himself to trying to show that the witnesses to the Resurrection were hallucinated and not to be believed.

Let us bring this first part of the Discourse to an end by affirming with the greatest possible certainty that Jesus, when He was put into the sepulcher, was undoubtedly dead.

And now did He truly rise again? As the first fact, that of His death, is most certain, so also is the second fact, that of His resurrection, also most certain. The same witnesses who prove the first fact prove also the second, and if possible their witness for the latter is stronger than for the former.

As I have already remarked, the testimony of those who affirm any fact can only reasonably be doubted by supposing either that they themselves are deceived and deluded, or that they are liars and deceivers. Once it is demonstrated that neither of these two hypotheses is possible, the truth of the fact to which they witness stands forth clear and evident beyond any shadow of doubt.

Now can the most subtle and the most distrustful critics even suspect that the witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ were the victims of hallucination or cheats and deceivers?

The third day after the death of Christ the sepulcher in which His lifeless body had been placed was opened, and all Jerusalem could, if they would, have seen that it was empty. What had become of the body? Renan answers that

that will never be known. Why will it never be known? It might never be known if the light of the sun could be shrouded in darkness, and if thousands of tongues preaching the truth everywhere and to all at the cost of their lives could be hushed.

Jesus, who was laid in the sepulcher and who was sought there in vain, was seen by several women who were going along the road; He was seen by Mary Magdalen near the sepulcher, He was seen by Peter, He was seen by James; He was seen on the day of His resurrection by the two disciples when on their way to Emmaus; He was seen by seven disciples together on the shore of Lake Genesareth; He was seen in the Cenacle by ten disciples gathered there, and eight days later by eleven; He was seen by one hundred and twenty persons near Bethania; He was seen, as St. Paul tells us, by nearly five hundred persons, many of whom were still living when St. Paul wrote his Letters; He was seen by men and women, sometimes separately and sometimes together; He was seen by day and by night, in houses, at table, on the shores of the lake, on the highways, on the mountain, in the garden. Those who saw Him spoke with Him, ate with Him, touched Him, listened to His words, put questions to Him, and He replied; and all this was going on for forty days at Jerusalem, in Judea, and in Galilee. And

are all these apparitions but illusions and hallucinations? Are they illusions and hallucinations, continuing as they did for so long a time, happening in places so numerous and diverse, to hundreds of persons of both sexes and of opposite character, commencing on a fixed day and ending on a fixed day?

I do not deny the surprising power of hallucination and the strange tricks that the imagination sometimes plays. I know that Theodoric saw upon the table the head of Symmachus, who had been murdered by his order. I know that it is narrated of Socrates and Torquato Tasso that they say their genius by their side; and Banquo's ghost, the stupendous creation of the greatest of English dramatists (stupendous, because it is in keeping with human nature), is celebrated. But who would think of comparing these creations of poetical genius, or these tricks of the fancy, with the apparitions of Christ recorded in the Gospels, in the Acts, and in the Letters of the Apostles? Only Theodoric himself saw the head of Symmachus upon the table, and saw it only once, and he knew well why he saw it; none of those at table with him saw it; they only compassionated the miserable man and were quite convinced that he was the victim of an illusion. Socrates and Tasso each saw his genius, but he was invisible both to their friends and to their disciples; it was a mo-

mentary hallucination, regarded as such, was of no practical importance, and had no connection with religion.

What a wide difference between these hallucinations and the apparitions of Christ, whether we consider their number, or those who bore witness to them, or the manner in which they occurred, or the circumstances that accompanied them, or the importance of the fact they attested, or the doctrine with which they were inseparably bound up? It is absolutely impossible in the whole history of mankind to find anything, I will not say equal to, but even resembling the Gospel narrative of the Resurrection. If the story of the apparitions of Christ could possibly admit of the suspicion of a continuous hallucination, then we should be forced to say that no reliance can be placed upon the evidence of the senses, that all history is destitute of any basis of truth, that a judge would not, even upon the testimony of ten men who agreed perfectly together, be justified in passing a sentence, and that our only refuge would be in a desolating skepticism.

But this is precisely the hypothesis upon which a celebrated author of the life of Christ has explained the miracle of the Resurrection.

It seemed impossible, he says, to the pious women, and above all to Mary Magdalen and to the disciples, that Jesus was really dead; they had

a confused belief in the immortality of the soul; they understood some expressions of Christ to imply a promise that He would rise from the dead. Magdalen, so ardent was her faith and so vivid, thought she heard Him and saw Him in the garden, and in the delirium of her joy the magic words, *"He is risen,"* escaped from her lips. Again: The apostles were shut up in the silence of the Cenacle; they thought they felt a soft breath passing over their heads, and some one cried out in that silence that he had heard the accustomed salutation of Jesus: *"Peace be to you."* Nothing more was needed, and they said: *"He is risen; we have heard Him, we have seen Him."* And thus did a universal and most firm faith in the resurrection of Christ originate, thus was it confirmed, thus, too, did Christianity with its teaching originate, and thus was it established. It rests upon the hallucination of a single woman, which was, by a sort of contagious, sympathetic influence and through a disposition to imitate inherent in our nature, easily communicated to the other women and to the disciples.[1] You may possibly

[1] The whole of this explanation of the Resurrection of Christ may be found in the first chapter of Renan's work, The Apostles. This is a masterpiece of mystification. According to him "the glory of the Resurrection belongs to Mary Magdalen; Jesus alone excepted, Mary contributed more than any one else to the founding of Christianity. "The shadow that was the creation of the delicate senses of Mary still governs the world. The queen and patron of idealists, Magdalen knew, as did no one else, how to insist upon her dream and to inflict upon all the vision of her passionate soul: her emphatic affirmation, He is risen! was the basis of the faith of hu-

think that, in giving you this explanation of the resurrection of Christ, as that of another and of one, too, not wanting in talent, in culture, and in an unusual æsthetic sense, I am trifling with you and doing an injustice to his memory. I am not trifling with you, nor am I doing an injustice to him; on the contrary I have faithfully reproduced his argument and his explanation, which indeed is nothing more than a summary of modern rationalistic thought. Such hypotheses or explanations are their own refutation; to state them is to disprove them and hold them up to scorn.

It is easier to believe that the soaring colossus of Mount Blanc is balanced on the point of a needle than to believe that the whole giant work of Christianity, with its dogmas, its code of morality, its stupendous hierarchical organization, rests upon the utterance of a woman, who in a moment of delirium or hallucination cried out: *"He is risen."*

And now allow me to make another observation on a point which I should think it wrong to pass over in silence.

I do not deny that hallucinations are possible,

manity. Away with impotent reason! Do not attempt to mar by cold analysis this masterpiece of idealism and love. If wisdom can not comfort this poor human race, so miserably betrayed, let us see if folly can not. What wise man has given to the world as much joy as the frenzied Mary of Magdala?" (pp. 13-14). The writer goes on in this vein, in which sophisms and the seductions of style and outrages upon common-sense mingle and struggle for the mastery.

but they are never quite so extravagant as those which rationalism imputes to those who witnessed the resurrection of Christ. When are hallucinations possible? When minds are prepared to welcome them, when they are under the influence of some impatient longing, of some burning desire, of some violent passion. A mother, who longs with a feverish anxiety for the return of her absent son, who weeps disconsolately for a babe she has lost, may easily fancy that she sees the former and holds the latter in her arms. The imagination may make an ardent and vivid yearning a reality. But was this the case with the apostles? Did not the women refuse to believe what they had seen? Did they not believe that the body of Christ had been taken away? Did not the apostles believe that the women were raving? Did they not themselves, on seeing Jesus, refuse to believe their eyes, and think they had seen a phantom? Did not Jesus find it necessary, in order to convince them of His presence, to make them touch His hands and the wounds of His body and to sit at table and eat with them? Did not one of the apostles stubbornly refuse to believe his companions who avowed that they had seen the risen Jesus, and only submitted when he had put his fingers into the place of the nails and his hand into His side? The apostles and the women, far from taking shadows for substance or from

being the victims of an hallucination, pushed incredulity to its utmost limits.

But, it is urged, all these witnesses to the resurrection of Christ were uncouth, ignorant, credulous, and disposed to accept whatever was marvelous and supernatural.

The most of them were, but not all. But let us grant that they all were. Here we have to do not with lengthy and subtle reasonings, with complicated questions in which the authority of the ignorant has no weight; we have to do with a material fact that was visible to all, a fact that took place, not once, but often, and under a variety of forms. Here reasonings, discussions, and difficult experiments were not required; all that was required were eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hands to touch; and the eyes and ears and hands of the apostles were as keen to see and as quick to hear and as sensitive to touch, as those of the academicians of Paris or elsewhere, and possibly more so. Where is the tribunal, which, if it wished to verify an assault or a homicide perpetrated on the public highway, would refuse the testimony of ten or twenty reasonable men who had seen it, simply because they are uncouth, ignorant, and uncultured? It would only ask to be assured that they had seen or heard what they attest and that they are morally worthy of being believed.

We have now proved beyond any shadow of doubt two facts: first, that Christ was really dead, and next, that the apostles and the other witnesses to His resurrection were not deceived and could not deceive themselves, and that they can not be supposed to have been the victims of an illusion or hallucination. And now let us go on with the argument.

And at this stage of the demonstration if we refuse to believe the witness of the apostles, of the disciples and the women, who affirmed that they had seen the risen Jesus, there is only one way open to us, and that is bluntly to affirm that they wished to deceive and did deceive. Very well; I will take it upon myself to prove that neither did they wish to deceive, nor could they have done so, had they wished to do so. I leave you to judge whether or not my argument is valid.

Let us pass in review those witnesses to the resurrection of Christ. They were simple men, rustics, ignorant, timid, who knew nothing of the affairs of the world; they were honest, upright, straightforward, candid as children, and incapable of telling an untruth. They had come from Galilee, where they had forsaken their nets and their boats, and they had brought with them the simplicity of the country, a happy ignorance of all deceit and trickery. This praise is given them by those who represent them as poor, deluded

beings. So simple were they and so frank that, in the writings they have left us, they reveal to the whole world the defects, the weaknesses, the rivalries, the jealousies, that were manifest among them; their dense ignorance, the reproofs of the Master, their fear, their flight, the perjuries of their chief, the horrible treason of one of their company, the errors into which they fell, their illusions, their obstinate unbelief; and they narrate all this artlessly, fearlessly, unostentatiously, with the simplicity of children, neither excusing nor defending themselves. And yet we are asked to believe that these men would deceive their brethren and deceive the whole world!

These witnesses professed to announce to their brethren and to all mankind the teachings of their Master to which, they protested, they had not added, and from which they had not taken away a syllable.

The doctrine which they professed and preached, both in public and in private, as necessary to salvation, condemned and abhorred lying and deceit in every form; they summarized their teaching on this point in the words of their Master: "Aye, aye. No, no." Can we believe that men who were disciples of such a Master and teachers of His doctrine could possibly become impostors and the propagators of a most wicked lie and of the most sacrilegious of deceptions? Who can

bring himself to believe that all the disciples of Christ, and even pious and magnanimous women, were all liars and impious scoffers against God and man?

And now let me submit an argument, at once concise and decisive. Either the disciples and the women believed that Christ was to rise or they did not so believe. If they believed, or even merely doubted it, what course should they naturally have adopted? It is plain that they should have said: "Christ will rise as He has promised; we shall wait until He does rise, and then we shall announce His resurrection; then He will have proved His divine mission." They would certainly not have had recourse to lying and deception. If they did not believe that He was to rise, why should they have lied about it and deceived their brethren? Why should they have entered upon a desperate conflict to serve a man whom they knew to be an impostor.

It should not be forgotten that the apostles and the women were all Jews, believing in the Jewish faith, deeply venerating Moses and the Law in which they had been born, in which they had grown up, and in which they had been educated. Does it seem possible that they would have dared to substitute for their Law and the Law of their fathers, another which they well knew was founded on a fraud?

Would not the apostles and the women, after the catastrophe of Calvary, when they had lost all hope of seeing Christ risen again, have realized their position and the difficulties in which the Master has involved them, and have appreciated the fact that He, who had promised to rise again, by not rising had made them objects of hatred and suspicion to all authority? And then the thought that they had lied for Him, that they had proclaimed Him the Messias and the Redeemer of the world, that they had adored Him as God, and that He had deceived them! What was now to be hoped for in persisting in so insane a course except the same vexations, persecution, and death that had been the lot of the Master, whose dead body was ever before their eyes? Being now without a head, friendless and helpless, shunned by all, dreading the dangers by which they were encompassed, ought they not have set out in haste for Galilee, have tried to forget the past, and have betaken themselves once more to their boats and nets?

But let us suppose, what is contrary to all probability, not to say possibility, that they feared neither God nor man; that they were not only daringly, but desperately courageous; that they were determined to persist in the insane attempt to found a new religion, based on the fact of the resurrection of the Master, a fact which they

knew was impossible; that they had resolved to take up and carry forward the work, in which the Master had so miserably perished, and, by proclaiming that He had risen, to spread the belief that He was the Saviour of the world and the Son of God. Not to fail in such an attempt it was necessary for them to enter into a conspiracy and to lay their plans so skilfully that there would be at least a possibility of success.

The disciples and the good women, and all witnesses to the Resurrection must have pledged themselves to one another and come together to devise their plans. When could they have done this? Precisely within the short interval between the death of Christ and the time designated for His resurrection. They could not have done so before His death, because they did not think it was possible for Him to die. They could not have done so after the designated time for His resurrection, because it would then have been already clear that the prophet was a false prophet. Now does it seem possible that such a reunion could have taken place during those hours of trepidation, confusion, and anguish? But let us suppose it possible. The most audacious and reckless among the conspirators, say, might have argued in this way: "We know that the Master will not rise; as far as He is concerned all is over; but we must complete the work laid out by Him and

found a new religion. Let us, then, daringly and boldly assert that He is risen; let us make Him the head of that religion; let us preach that the Master is God, and that it is necessary to believe in Him, and, if need be, to die for Him. Certainly it is a monstrous lie and will cost us imprisonment, banishment, and death. But, no matter, we shall thus vindicate both our Master and ourselves. Let us all promise on oath to affirm always and everywhere, even at the risk of our lives, that Jesus is risen." How would so impious and stupid a proposition be received by the others? The apostles knew themselves well enough to realize that such an enterprise was impossible. Only the evening before, while the Master was still alive, they would have said: "We all fled; we abandoned and denied Him; one of us betrayed Him; we have as our enemies the Romans and the Sanhedrim; if the Master was crucified, what may we expect? How shall we all, even the women, keep the secret? If one proves a traitor and reveals the conspiracy, we are all lost. And then how can we, and why should we, deceive the world? What can we gain by doing so here in this world? And if we should have reward here, can we escape the wrath of God?"

These are reflections so obvious that they must have presented themselves to the minds of the apostles and of the women and have made such an

undertaking impossible. But let us grant that the foolish and impious proposition was favorably received by them all; it was still necessary to put it into execution and at once, before the end of the third day, the last moment fixed by Christ for fulfilling His pledge.

The most urgent and essential business now was to get the body from the sepulcher and make away with it. But the sepulcher was guarded, and most likely by foreigners, who, being warned of the danger of theft, kept a vigilant watch upon it.

Were the guards venal, could they be bought off with money? Granting that they were susceptible to a bribe, money must be had and a large sum, and at once, and where was it to be had, as the disciples were all poor? And who would undertake the dangerous mission of making the proposal to the soldiers? Might not the offer be rejected and the ones who made it be carried before the Sanhedrim? Or might not the soldiers accept the money, fail to keep their contract, and denounce to the authorities those who had attempted to corrupt them? Who could guarantee that the secret, so essential to be kept, would not be betrayed?

They might put the soldiers to flight and forcibly seize the body. For this both arms and daring would be required, and to fancy that men in such distress possessed either, and least of all courage, would be a delusion.

But let us suppose that they had recourse to violence and made an attack on the guards. If the guards came off victors, the body would be still where it was; if they were overcome they would have said that they had been set upon by a superior force and that the body had been carried off by the disciples. In either case the plot would have been discovered.

But the guards slept, the Jews said, and while they were asleep the disciples might have come and carried off the body of Christ, and then they could have proclaimed: "Jesus is risen!"

Granted that some slept, did they all sleep? Could the apostles know that they slept? And was none of them awakened by the coming and going of the disciples, by the noise of the rolling back of the great stone from the mouth of the sepulcher? It is too much to ask us to believe all this.

And who said that the guards slept? The guards themselves. Can men who are asleep bear witness? And being unfaithful to their duty they were not punished? It is too much to ask us to believe this.

Within eight years one of the evangelists solemnly affirmed that the chief priests and ancients gave a great sum of money to the soldiers to spread the report that, while they slept, the disciples stole away the body of Christ. And who-

ever stood forth to contradict the evangelist? No one, an evident proof that the statement was not false.

But let us make still larger concessions to our adversaries; let us grant that the women and the disciples did enter into an impious and atrocious conspiracy to proclaim to the world that Christ had risen, and, farther, that they succeeded in carrying off His body, and that all was planned and executed within the forty-eight hours that elapsed between the death of Christ and the moment when the cry went forth: "He is risen!" All this is, as you see, an accumulation of facts which is in itself morally impossible. But let us grant all this.

There was, then, a conspiracy to deceive the Jewish nation and the entire world; all the disciples and the women formed an essential part of it, and it devolved on them to take the first steps in carrying it out.

Here, then, is a conspiracy, hastily and inconsiderately devised, the sole actors in which are some dozens of men and a few women. All of them being fully conscious of their own and their companions' weakness, a proof of which was still vivid in their memories, could they trust one another? Where there is not absolute confidence and trust among conspirators a conspiracy is impossible.

Now it must be taken for granted that, if those disciples of Christ and those women would consent to engage in so infamous an undertaking, they were all without a single exception the most wicked, impious, and depraved of mankind, and destitute both of religion and of conscience. Do you think it possible that those apostles, ignorant indeed and uncouth, but honest and straightforward, and those pious women, would or could give themselves to so execrable a work; that they would be parties to a deception practised upon their brethren in a matter of all things to them the most august and holy, namely their religion; that they would be parties to a conspiracy the scope of which was to subvert their own religion and the religion of their fathers, and to substitute in its stead another, whose author they knew to be an impostor and a madman?

Again: Any one who sets about a difficult enterprise, in which not only his peace, but his honor, his liberty, and his life are put to hazard, ought to ask himself two questions: first, is the enterprise possible? next, if it is possible, is the hope of the reward to be gained from it equal to the risk to be taken and the toil to be endured?

Although we may suppose the apostles and the women ignorant and inexperienced in the affairs of the world, still we must agree that they ought to have seen and did see clearly enough that their

desperate undertaking was simply impossible. They were perfectly well aware that they were poor, ignorant, timid, unaccustomed to the world, friendless, without standing or position, and without a leader; they saw before them the authority of the Synagogue, all powerful, learned, highly esteemed, wealthy, and enjoying a prestige of a long past; and they saw behind the authority of the Synagogue the authority of Rome, which during the terrible drama, of which the Master was the chief figure, yielded to the Synagogue and abandoned Him to its fury after vainly attempting to defend Him. Could they hope to succeed where the Master had failed?

And what could they hope to gain from so foolish an undertaking except imprisonment, scourgings, exile, and the most cruel death, and after death the contempt and obloquy of posterity? These are considerations which would unquestionably have deterred men the most wicked and audacious from entering into such a conspiracy, and if so, what are we to say of the apostles and of the women, who though cowardly, were yet upright and religious?

It is time to make an end to our Discourse. I say, then, that there can not be the least doubt concerning the death of Christ; that the number of witnesses who attested the Resurrection is so great and their character such that the fact could

not be made more certain; that these witnesses could not have been themselves deceived or deluded; and that neither did they, nor could they, had they so desired, deceive others.

I think I have logically and by the most rigorous reasoning demonstrated all this and shut every avenue against sophism, and I appeal to yourselves, as reasonable men and women, if I have not. What conclusion follows? This—Christ is truly risen. Hence the doctrine that He taught is true; hence He is truly God our Saviour; therefore full of faith and burning with love for Him, we say to Him in the words of the apostle Thomas, My Lord and my God!

DISCOURSE II

The Resurrection of Christ the Miracle of Miracles

THE scope of the work of Christ upon earth, briefly stated, was this: to teach the truth and regenerate souls by His grace. "I am come," He said to the Roman governor, who questioned Him, "I am come to bear witness to the truth." It is by truth—and by truth alone—that minds are loosed from the bondage of error and hearts transformed.

But how was He to get men to accept His truth? By discussion and human arguments, as do the learned and the teachers of this world?

This was impossible, first, because most men are incapable of reasoning on deep subjects, and, next, because His doctrine for the most part transcended the powers of human reason. The great men who have convulsed the world and left deep traces of their presence behind them did so, not by rigorous and elaborate arguments; whether for good or evil they professed to be doing the will of God, and thus by the enthusiasm of faith and obedience got people to follow them. A school may be formed by scientific arguments, or an academy gained over, but the people, the multitude are not so won.

Jesus Christ knew men well, and to gain them what did He do? He told them plainly: "Believe My teaching. I am the light of the world." "But why," they said, "should we believe Your teaching? Why should we believe in You; why should we believe that You are the Son of God, You, who are a man, as we are?" "If you will not believe My words, believe My works, which none other hath done; they give testimony of Me, they bear witness to whom I am." His credentials were His miracles, which He scattered about Him as He went on His way preaching the truth; these He laid before men, and in virtue of them demanded their absolute faith. And who could refuse to give it?

Among the countless miracles that made the whole life of Christ resplendent, there is one which is the complement and crown of all the others, one which summarizes and confirms them all, one to which He appealed as to the supreme proof of His mission, one which, if there were no others, would be amply sufficient for all His needs and which challenges all the assaults of science, namely, the Resurrection, which the Church to-day commemorates with solemn rite and pageantry.

Although in the preceding Discourse I so firmly established the certainty of the Resurrection as to leave not the least doubt about it in the minds of men capable of reasoning and free from the

trammels of prejudice, still this fact, this underlying dogma of our faith, is so important that it will not be amiss to return to it and to consider some aspects of it, which lack of time prevented me from then laying before you.

After a brief observation, which I think important, we shall see that the miracle of the resurrection of Christ contains also a prophecy; and that this miracle, considered both in itself and in its effects upon the apostles, is such that no other miracle of Christ, even the most stupendous, can bear comparison with it; and, finally, that it absolutely silences the most obstinate and arrogant unbelievers.

Let us open the Four Gospels and read the passages in which the resurrection of Christ is recorded. I beg you to observe the order and the drift of those narratives, brief and simple beyond anything in profane literature. The first to appear on the scene is a woman, Mary Magdalen, who finding the tomb open and empty, all excited runs to the apostles and cries out: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher and we know not where they have laid Him." Peter and John, on hearing Mary Magdalen, run to the sepulcher and find it open as she had said; they see linen cloths lying there and the napkin that had been about His head, and they know not what to think of it all, never suspecting that

He had risen. The apostles refuse to believe the women, who said that they had seen Him, and think them visionaries or delirious.

The first to see the risen Lord and to attest His resurrection are the women; next come the two disciples on the way to Emmaus; then the ten apostles; then the eleven; then the seven, and so on, and finally the five hundred. In the Gospel narrative the apparitions so follow one another and are so interwoven that at times they seem to conflict.

Note that these narratives are very brief, utterly without a shadow of art, and that they admirably reflect the mental state of the disciples and of the women, who pass from fear to belief, from unbelief to doubt and protest, who desire to see and to touch the risen Lord, who think in seeing Him that they see a phantom, who adore Him, ask Him childish questions, betraying their incredible ignorance, such as: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel"?[1] All this is recorded in three or four pages; the narrative is unstudied and almost without order, and so frank that there is nothing comparable to it in all the world's literature, either sacred or profane. There is not a single exclamation of surprise, not a single passionate outburst of amazement or gladness, not a single allusion to

[1]Acts i. 6.

the triumph of Jesus Christ over His enemies, or to their own confusion, or to the hopes of the future; none of the language of bewilderment and enthusiasm, which we might naturally expect; all is tranquil and natural, all is simple and ordinary. If we except the appearance of the angel or angels at the sepulcher, the apparitions of Christ entering through closed doors, and a few other facts, there is not even any manifestation of the supernatural. There is an utter absence of magnificent word-painting and splendid scenes intended to produce an effect, to excite the imagination, and to evoke sentiment. Do not lose sight of the fact that the resurrection is the culminating point of faith, the triumph of Christ, and the sovereign proof of His divinity.

Now, my friends, let me ask you, does not this Gospel narrative, containing the fact, the dogma, the palmary miracle of all religion, so briefly, simply, and naturally told, so free from all art or effort, exhibit all the characteristics of sincerity and truth? Let us freely admit, what must be admitted, that if the witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, if the apostles and evangelists, who narrate it, had invented it, although ignorant, they would have represented and described it quite differently, in order to make it more credible; they would have told us that they were altogether in some open place; they would have

given a most glowing description of Christ, have represented Him as radiant with light and encompassed with all possible glory; they would all have seen Him at the same time, would all have seen the same figure and heard the same words; they would have planned the resurrection of Christ in such a way that all would at all times and under every provocation have been consistent in bearing witness to it. There is nothing of all this artifice; everything is just the contrary. We have, then, in the narrative of this great fact all the manifest characteristics of truth, and hence we may conclude with the great apologist that the Gospel narrative of the resurrection is too simple not to be true, and that the fact of the resurrection is too true not to be simple.[1]

Having reinforced what was said in the last Discourse by this observation, let us go on to the demonstration of the first part of the present, namely, that the resurrection of Christ is not only an undoubted miracle, but also a prophecy, and such a prophecy that it stands absolutely alone and, if possible, increases the certainty of the fact of the Resurrection and therefore of the miracle.

A miracle is a visible and absolutely certain fact, which, reason tells us, transcends the forces of nature, and which therefore must be attributed to God alone.

[1]Monsabré, Conf. 48.

A prophecy is a clear and absolutely certain foretelling of a fact, either necessary or free, that is, dependent upon free agents, which it is impossible by human means to foresee.

The Resurrection is a visible and most certain fact which absolutely transcends all the powers of man; it is therefore a miracle.

This miracle was clearly and undeniably foretold by Christ before it took place; it is therefore a true and a resplendent prophecy.

Is it true that Christ foretold His death, the manner of His death, and His resurrection? Listen: "As Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights."[1] Again: "The Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death and they shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and the third day He shall rise again."[2] Again: "The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him, and after that He is killed He shall rise again the third day."[3] Again: "He shall be delivered to the Gentiles and shall be mocked and scourged and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him they will put Him to death, and the

[1]Matt. xii. 40.
[2]Ibid. xx. 18-19.
[3]Mark ix. 30.

third day He shall rise again."[1] Finally, the day before His death Jesus said: "After I shall be risen again I will go before you into Galilee"[2] It should be noted that the evangelists nearly always add to these words by way of comment, that the disciples did not understand anything of all this, that is, they could neither bring it home to themselves nor believe that what He said could come to pass.

You will agree after listening to these words that they could not be clearer or more explicit. In the course of three years they were uttered, not once, but often, being always almost identical; they were uttered before the fact took place, and they were recorded by witnesses whose authority can not be questioned.

Could Christ, humanly speaking, foretell His death at the hands of His enemies? Knowing how they hated Him He could foretell it in a general way, but He could not foretell the minute particulars, as one reads them in the Gospel. How could He as man foretell that He was to be given over to the Gentiles, scourged, spit upon, and crucified? All this depended not upon His own will, but upon that of others, and God alone could have foreseen it all.

Could He foretell so precisely His resurrection, fixing the time and place where and when He

[1]Luke 18, 33.
[2]Matt. xxvi. 32.

would show Himself to the apostles? To ask the question is to answer it. A dead man can do nothing; he is wholly at the disposal of others; and this was all the more true of Christ, since He was in the hands of His enemies.

And here it is to be borne in mind that not only had His enemies possession of His body and had at hand a power to do their bidding, but they were perfectly familiar with the prophecy He had made, "*The third day I will rise again.*"[1] Time and again He had appealed to His resurrection on the third day as to the supreme proof of His divine mission. This was to be the miracle by excellence, the miracle of miracles, the seal of all His other miracles, and so it was in fact. This was the prophecy which, as a most formidable challenge, He cast into the teeth of the Synagogue and of all His other enemies: "You will not believe My doctrine; I shall give such a proof of My mission that you can not ask a more decisive one; I tell you plainly, and note it well, you will murder Me by nailing Me to the cross, you will bury Me, but on the third day I will rise again. Now I have told you in order that you may take all precautions." Thus challenged the Synagogue did take all precautions. Christ was scarcely dead and laid away in the tomb when the chiefs of the people and of the priests went to Pilate and said:

[1]Matt. xxvii. 63, 64.

"Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said while He was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulcher to be guarded until the third day lest perhaps His disciples come and steal Him away and say to the people that He is risen from the dead; and the last error shall be worse than the first."[1] Here are two adversaries facing each other; the one says: "I will die by your hand; I will be buried; and I tell you, before it happens, I will rise the third day. So be on your guard." The other says: "I accept the challenge; you will be in my hands; your body will be shut up in the sepulcher; I shall see that the stone is sealed and for greater security I shall place a guard of soldiers about it until the end of the third day. Rise, if you can."

Hence this clear prediction was made, not once, but often before the event; those who both from hatred and interest should have prevented its fulfilment were solemnly warned in advance and were furnished with every means of preventing it that power could supply. Nor were they lacking either in zeal or in the discharge of their duty; they left nothing undone to falsify the prophecy, and, having put Christ to death as a rebel against authority and as a blasphemer, they wanted to put on His forehead the mark of an impostor and of a false prophet. It should seem, as you will

[1]Matt. xxvii. 63, 64.

agree, that the victory in this unequal duel between Christ and the Synagogue, a duel fought out in Jerusalem, in the capital of the kingdom, under the eyes of the entire nation gathered for the feast of the Pasch, promised to be certainly a victory for His enemies. But what happened? At the dawn of the third day, full of life and glowing with immortal youth, He overturned the stone of the sepulcher, put the guards to flight and showed Himself under various guises to the women, to the disciples, to the apostles, and to hundreds of persons for the space of forty days. That fact which created a greater uproar than any other that has ever happened on this earth, which is of all miracles, as of all prophecies, the greatest, was publicly recorded; both the Synagogue and the Roman governor knew that it was recorded, and both could have and ought to have most solemnly denied it; the interest and the honor of both demanded that they should deny it and both were forced to keep silence. Within a few years that fact was preached throughout the whole Greek and Roman world and beyond their confines; that fact became the foundation of the most sublime religion that ever filled space and time, a religion that is day by day enlarging its boundaries; and we, gathered in this temple today, join our voices to the voices of all Catholics and Christians scattered over the broad face of

the globe in celebrating it, in professing in it an undying faith and in singing with the Church, *Christ is risen indeed!*

Christ to-day comes before all the world both as the *greatest of wonder-workers* and as the *greatest of prophets,* for by the resurrection of His body He wrought the *greatest* of miracles, and by this greatest of miracles He fulfilled the greatest of prophecies under the very eyes of His enemies, to whom He Himself had foretold it. Thus He proved that He was Master of all the forces of nature, whose laws He suspended, and Master of the future, whose most hidden secrets He revealed, and which He compelled to obey Him. But let us linger for a moment to examine the singular nature of this miracle and this prophecy of the resurrection and thus bring out the grandeur of both into stronger relief.

It is with miracles as with the facts or phenomena of nature; as these are distinguished from one another, one being greater and more important than another, so it is with miracles. All of them are, either in substance or in method, beyond the forces of nature, but in either respect one may be greater than another. It is a miracle to walk upon the waters and by a word to cleanse one from leprosy and restore sight to one born blind; but it is assuredly a far greater miracle to call back to new life one who has been four days

dead after decomposition has set in. The last miracle is not only superior to all the forces of nature, but is manifestly a violation of them, since life abhors a putrefied corpse. What, then, shall be said of the resurrection of Christ? Gaze upon that body which loving hands have composed in the grave. It is all livid and covered with blood; the head is pierced with thorns, the hands and feet are torn with nails, the side is pierced with a lance; it no longer resembles the body of a man; it lies there stretched on the cold stone; corruption has not touched that adorable body and never shall; it awaits the coming of that blessed soul that is its mistress and that will give it its second life, its life of glory.

The miracles wrought by God and recorded both in the Old Testament and in the New are numerous, and nearly all are wrought by the agency of others. Prophets and patriarchs, saints and apostles, are instruments in the hands of God, who commands nature and suspends or changes its laws. And how many were wrought by Christ during the course of His public life? It is to be noted, however, that nearly all those miracles were wrought, not upon those who performed them, but on some person or object outside of them; the waters of the sea part at the command of Moses; the day lengthens out at the word of Josue; the fire from heaven descends at

the bidding of Elias; by the authority of Christ the halt stand erect, the blind see, the lepers are cleansed, the dumb speak; at His word the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Naim, and Lazarus, who had been four days dead, come back to life. As you will observe, none of these miracles was wrought on the person of those who performed it; they were wrought on creatures of some kind outside of them, and the action of God, the wonder-worker, was carried on to those creatures as to its term or object. But this was not the case in the miracle of the Resurrection; in this the miracle was wrought by Christ upon His own body, into which, contrary to all the laws of nature, He poured a flood of new life. Here it is not the living Christ calling back the dead to life; but it is the Christ, dead as man, who, as He foretold, raises Himself from the dead. Now, one who is dead can perform no act, for what can a dead man do? He can do nothing; death is absolutely helpless. And yet the man Christ, being dead, restores life to Himself.

And how does He restore it? Little by little? No, He restores it in a flash. Does He make use of others? No, everything is done by Himself. He gives life, and at the same time He Himself receives it; He does just what He said He would do: "*I will rise again.*" The Person of the Word was never separate from the soul He assumed;

He filled the whole soul with His infinite virtue, and joined it again to the body that lay there cold, motionless, and silent in the sepulcher. In an instant the flood of life swept through those rigid members, the heart beat, the blood went leaping through veins and arteries, the rents in hands and feet and side disappeared, the wounds closed and were healed, and the body, refreshed and filled with strength, was radiant with newness of life and unearthly beauty. Without effort, without noise, without even breaking or overturning the stone at the mouth of the sepulcher, He came forth, as became the omnipotent Worker, and began that life of glory that will never end.

Some before Christ, as the Sacred Books attest, and some after Christ, as we learn from writers worthy of belief, escaped from the prison of death and took up again their living bodies; but they took them up by the power of God, by the act of Christ, or through saints to whom God granted this great favor; they took them up, that is, not by their own power, as masters of life, but through the agency of others, who were God's servants. But Christ took up His body by His own power, as absolute Lord of life. They were withdrawn from the dominion of death, but only for a time, and soon fell again under its empire and descended again into the grave. Christ rose, but He rose to die no more, and hence He is called

by St. Paul the first-fruits of the risen, the true, the only, the perfect vanquisher of death.

The resurrection of Christ is, then, the miracle of miracles, because with it the greatest of prophecies is interwoven, and because He who receives life is He who gives it. Having considered the fact of the resurrection in itself let us go on a step further and consider it in its effects upon the apostles.

My friends, call to mind who and what the apostles were before the resurrection, and then consider who and what they were after the resurrection. Let us put aside their plebeian origin and their lowly calling; they were sprung from the common people, they were born in the most despised region of Palestine, they were absolutely illiterate, boorish, coarse, ignorant of the world, and diffident as children. The questions they put from time to time to the Master exhibit them to us not only as artless and ingenuous, but as men of intelligence so limited, that we should be almost tempted to believe that on this point the Gospels have exaggerated. At times they did not seem to know the meaning of the most ordinary expressions or to recognize miracles when they saw them. They sought to supplant one another in the esteem of the Master and they disputed which of them should be first in the future kingdom of which Jesus Christ spoke and which, they

took it for granted, must be a temporal kingdom.

How often had the Master spoken to them of His sufferings, death, and resurrection in the clearest possible terms! They comprehended nothing of what He said to them; His words were enigmas. When the hour of trial came and they saw their Master in the hands of His enemies they forgot the repeated protests they had made to follow Him to prison and to death. One betrayed Him; another face to face with His enemies denied Him; all took to flight and like cravens abandoned Him. When Jesus rose from the dead those miserable apostles were gathered together behind closed doors for fear of the Jews; and eight days later, when there was no doubt that Jesus Christ had risen, they were still, and from fear, gathered together, the doors being closed. If we are to believe the Gospel, written by two of the apostles, and by two contemporary disciples at their dictation, they were all cowardly, weak, timid, and craven.

Now consider these same apostles, after they had been assured by His frequent apparitions that their Master was risen, and after they had been endowed with strength from on high, and recognize them if you can. They went forth into the streets of Jerusalem; they entered the Temple, erect and fearless; they harangued the populace;

they addressed the chiefs of the people and the high priests and preached Jesus Christ everywhere. And what was the great and decisive argument which they never failed to use and to which they were ever appealing in their discourses? The resurrection of their Master. "We have seen Him," they said; "we have spoken with Him, we have eaten with Him, we have heard His words, we have touched Him with our hands. Yes, that same Jesus, whom you condemned and whom you nailed to the Cross, is risen; of this we are ourselves witnesses. He bade us preach His doctrine everywhere and to all, to preach the necessity of believing in Him and that He is the Son of God, and this we preach to you." This they affirmed not once but hundreds of times, not for a single year but for decades of years, with their very last words, and with a marvelous constancy. Both in public and in private, among friends and enemies, believers and unbelievers, before peoples and kings, by word of mouth and in writing, their utterance was ever the same: "Christ is God; we must believe in Him because He is risen." This they taught when they were all together in Jerusalem, when they traversed Judea and Samaria; then they separated; some set out toward Persia and India, others went up and down Asia Minor, Ethiopia, and Scythia; others passed into Greece and Macedonia, others took up their abode in

Rome. But they never changed, go where they would, an iota of their doctrine and they gave always the same proof for it: "Jesus Christ is risen; we have seen Him."

They were banished, harassed in a thousand ways, scourged, torn limb from limb, crucified, murdered, and all died martyrs, but they had ever upon their lips the same confession of faith: "Jesus Christ is God; He is risen from the dead." The whole world was bewildered and even their most rabid enemies bore solemn testimony to their spotless and holy lives, their amazing charity, and their indomitable courage and chivalrous heroism.

And is it to be believed for a moment that those extraordinary men would have endured so long and so cruel a martyrdom and would all have died for Jesus Christ if He had deceived them, if He had not risen, if they knew Him to be an impudent impostor, if He had betrayed them and encompassed them with every sort of danger by pretending to be the Son of God and promising after death to rise again? And can we believe that they would have glorified such a man, have sacrificed everything for His sake, life and honor, conscience and religion?

Every one who has any knowledge of human nature well knows that during the heat of party conflict, when the passions are aflame, when self-

love is wounded, when interest, ambition, and the desire of revenge are all at stake, it is amazing what dangers will be freely faced, what sacrifices cheerfully made; but let the passions cool, let the smoke of conflict pass away, let calm and reflection succeed to anger and to the rancor of party strife, and then the relative attitude of parties changes, and things are seen in a new light. Both sides come to see and understand what are their real interests and what is detrimental to them; little by little the conflict that divided them recedes into the past, and they begin to feel the need of making peace and of coming to terms with those whom, but a little while back, they so fiercely fought. Each sees and admits that in a measure he was wrong in breaking with those who are now his enemies, and he has the manliness and the courage to admit it and to seek the first occasion for a reconciliation. Such is human nature at bottom, as all history attests.

Now let us suppose that the apostles, full of love and enthusiasm for Jesus Christ and of hatred and malevolence against His enemies, had determined to assert the resurrection of Jesus Christ and to establish upon this assertion the divinity of their Master. Considering the character of the apostles and the religious and moral conditions of the Jews, as a whole, this was very unlikely, nay, absolutely impossible to accom-

plish; still let us suppose it. After one, ten, or twenty years the apostles were separated from one another, absolutely isolated; some being in the east, some in the west, some in the north and some in the south; none of them had any news of his friends and companions; not one knew whether they were living or dead, well or ill received, whether they had failed or succeeded. It is but natural that what would happen to other men similarly circumstanced should have happened to the apostles, and to them more likely than to others, scattered as they were and having to encounter the severest trials. They must necessarily have felt the extreme difficulty of the daring and desperate undertaking in which they were engaged; discouragement must have taken possession of their minds, and they must at times have doubted of the firmness and constancy of their companions. Thoughts would arise in their minds such as these: "If the other conspirators should prove false? If they should confess that they were themselves deceived and that they now wish to deceive others? If having faltered in the face of difficulty, or being frightened at the number and power of their enemies, or having been gained over by promise and reward, they had revealed everything and by their confession had purchased impunity, what would become of themselves?"

If in trying moments of moral discouragement, so likely to come upon any one, and particularly upon poor fishermen, living in a constant state of alarm, in countries of whose language they were ignorant, in immense centers of wealth and magnificence, such as Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch, they felt, as they must have felt, their utter impotence, their thoughts would have naturally gone back to their tranquil lives on the shores of the Galilean lake, to the meetings in the Synagogue, to the rites and practices of the venerable religion they had forsaken, and they would have felt rising in their hearts feelings of harrowing remorse for their apostasy and for the enormous crime they were guilty of in persevering in a mission to deceive the world. What good could come of it either to themselves or to others? What reward could they have either here or hereafter? Were they not the craziest of lunatics and the most stupid of dolts to go on in this senseless and impious undertaking of imposing upon the world belief in a man who was crucified, and who, they asserted, had risen from the dead, when they knew that he had not risen? Would not some one change his mind and unmask the whole imposture? Would they all, without a single exception, go on to the very end of their lives lying, deceiving, and preaching that he, whom they knew to be nothing but a low adventurer, a deluded wretch, a rascal,

whom justice had overtaken and who was finally put to death, was God? All this is such a heap of improbabilities, contradictions, and absurdities, of lies, impieties, and stupidities, that no example of anything like it can be found in all history, ancient or modern, sacred or profane.

And now let us stop and draw the conclusion, which can be none other than this: The apostles after the resurrection were instantly and totally changed into other men. Their courage, their spirit of sacrifice, the holiness of their lives, their constancy, were all in the highest degree heroic. They all, without a single exception, endured martyrdom for Jesus Christ. That such courage and faith, such love for Jesus Christ, which never for an instant faltered or weakened, presupposes in them the most steadfast and unflinching certainty in His doctrine, His mission, and His divinity, none can deny. Now what was their palmary argument, the underlying and absolute foundation, that kept them resolute and fearless in the presence of the gibbet and death? They themselves have told us and they have reiterated it a hundred times: "*He was dead, and, as He promised, He is risen and we have seen Him.*"

My friends, a very profound philosopher and rigorous reasoner,[1] once wrote: "We must believe

[1]The philosopher and reasoner whose words are here quoted, as given in his Thoughts, is Blaise Pascal.

witnesses who allow themselves to be murdered for what they attest; the apostles and disciples, some dozens of upright, virtuous, simple men, contrary to all their own interests, affirm that they saw Jesus Christ risen, and rather than deny it they allowed themselves to be murdered; therefore *we must believe that Jesus Christ* is risen; and, if He is risen, that He is the worker of the greatest of miracles, that He is a prophet, and we must believe what He said of Himself, namely, that He is the Son of God, and God. Hence, we must believe in Him, we must believe His doctrine, and if necessary we must, as the apostles did, die for Him."

DISCOURSE III

Why the Risen Jesus Showed Himself Only to His Friends

To our weak minds the mysteries of our faith are obscure, not from a lack, but because of a superabundance of light. We can not bear to look directly at the sun with the naked eye; and should we dare to look into the ocean of flashing light that goes out from it, our eyes would be dazzled and almost blinded. To benefit from the light of the sun it must come to us indirectly and through some medium, scattered, as it were, over a thousand objects that reflect and soften it. It is a strange fact; the sun, by which we see all things, will not suffer us directly to look upon itself and should we rashly attempt to do so, we are blinded.

This is analogous to what happens to the eye of the mind illuminated by faith. The Christian mysteries are so many suns that flood the heaven of the Church with torrents of light and, like our sun, shed their rays upon all truths scattered over the vast field of revelation, but can not themselves be directly looked upon; and hence they must be studied in their application, in the harmonious relation they bear to other revealed truths, and in those aspects, which, if the expression be allowed,

are accessible to our reason. How often, when we see the peaks of the mountains clothed with the rays of the morning sun, itself not yet visible, do we exclaim, "The sun is risen," when in truth it is still below the horizon? So, also, in seeing the reflected light of a mystery we may in a sense be said to see the mystery itself.

Any one who meditates upon the simple and touching story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as recounted in the Four Gospels, will be struck at once by a most singular fact and one worthy of attention.

Jesus Christ came forth from the sepulcher full of immortal life and for the space of forty days showed Himself under various forms to some hundreds of persons. And who were those persons whom Jesus honored by showing Himself to them, by speaking to them words of comfort and whom He made witnesses of His resurrection?

My heart tells me at once that Jesus, as soon as He rose, and before all others, rejoiced His mother by His presence. His affection as a son and her position as mother, who had shared His suffering and His agony, all required this. And although no evangelist refers to it, who can doubt it? The reason for this mysterious silence is manifest. Had the Mother been introduced into the narrative as the first witness of the resurrection of her Son, the fact might have given rise to

doubts in some minds, and hence the evangelists were silent on this point. Jesus showed Himself to the devout women, to the disciples and apostles, and, as St. Paul bears witness, to about five hundred persons, but all those to whom He appeared under various guises were devoted to Him, were more or less believers, and were looking forward to His resurrection. Go through the Four Gospels, search all the Books of the New Testament, and you will not find that the risen Christ showed Himself to a single one of His enemies. True, later on He appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus; but this apparition did not take place within the period of the forty days and can not be said to be one of that cycle, so to speak, of Gospel apparitions intended to confirm the faith of the apostles and disciples in the resurrection. That apparition, like the calling itself of St. Paul to the apostolate, was out of the ordinary.

This fact, that the risen Christ showed Himself often to His disciples or friends and only to them, may surprise some and give an opportunity to certain haughty spirits, who would judge the works of God from their human point of view, to cast doubt upon the miracle of the resurrection, because it was witnessed and attested only by persons who were bound to Jesus Christ by ties of faith and love, and therefore suspected by His enemies.

It will, then, be worth while to inquire into the reasons why it pleased the risen Jesus to show Himself, not to His enemies, but only to His friends; and in so doing we shall see that this conduct on the part of Our Saviour does not in the least lessen the certainty of the resurrection, and we shall also have an occasion to make some practical reflections at once serviceable and instructive.

God, my friends, is absolute Master of His own gifts and He may grant them or refuse them to whom He wills, and neither man on earth nor angel in heaven has a right to ask a reason for His action. May the pitcher say to the potter who shapes it: "Why have you made me so?" May the servant say to his master: "Why have you not given to me gifts such as you gave to the other servants?" "Who distinguisheth thee? or what hast thou that thou has not received?"[1] What rights have you in the presence of God? None. This truth is so clear that to waste words on it is to obscure it.

Now to look upon the risen Jesus with one's own eyes, to hear His words, and to converse with Him, was certainly a distinguished favor to which no one had, or could have, an absolute right. On the other hand Jesus was free to show Himself where and when and as He would, to friends or

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

to enemies, as a gardener, as a pilgrim, or radiant with light, at table, or on the shores of the lake, on the mountains or on the highway, and in whatever guise He saw fit.

Still the question comes back: Why did He always show Himself only to His disciples and friends? Jesus Christ is infinite wisdom and never does anything at haphazard; and hence there must be reasons for His so acting, and reasons, too, worthy of His wisdom and goodness. It is not wrong, and neither is it rash to inquire what they were, provided we do so reverently and provided we are prepared, if we do not find what we seek, to adore the secret counsels of His wisdom.

First of all, then, it is manifest from the Gospels that Jesus Christ often promised His apostles and disciples that after three days He would rise from the dead, that He would see them again, that then their sorrows should be turned into gladness and their joy would be complete. The promise was made and should be kept, and Jesus did keep it.

I am well aware that Jesus spoke to the Pharisees and to His enemies of His resurrection, and His promise to them concerning it was clear and distinct; but, as far as I know, there is not a passage in Sacred Writ in which He gave them His word, as He did to His apostles and disciples, that

He would show Himself to them after He had risen.

And there are weighty reasons why Jesus Christ should, after He had risen, deal with those who were dear to Him differently from the way in which, as was fitting, He dealt with His implacable enemies.

The apostles, the disciples, and the devout women had followed Him constantly and loyally; they had thrown in their lot with His; they had shared with Him toils and persecutions, calumnies, insults, and sorrows, and if, during His last trials, they forsook Him, they never wholly lost faith in Him. During that fatal night they fled and were dispersed through fear; and in such straits a temporary flight might be pardoned; their faith, such as it was, and their love for their Master, although weak and imperfect, were never extinct in their hearts; they were only dimmed and enfeebled, and this is clearly proved by their conduct during the anxious hours that passed between His death and His resurrection.

I know very well that to see the risen Christ was a signal favor, and such a favor that even the apostles and disciples, had they been as faithful and as fearless as His mother, could have had no claim to it; and this I have already said. Still it is nevertheless true that they had in a way done much to merit this high privilege. After the flight

they gathered together in one place; their Master was constantly in their thoughts; He was the subject of their conversation; they grieved over His death and could not be comforted. Peter had denied Him, and he wept over his fall and was inconsolable. They prayed and in a confused way looked forward to His resurrection. Nay, more. Some of the disciples, who up to that time had concealed the fact from fear of the Synagogue, becoming suddenly not only courageous but daring, went to the Roman governor and asked for the body of Christ, to bury it; and going up to Calvary took the body from the cross, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth with spices, and lovingly laid it away in the sepulcher. And, then, what shall we say of the women who showed themselves more fearless and resolute than the apostles? They followed Jesus up the hill of Calvary, they wept bitter tears at the foot of the cross, and they comforted, as best they could, both the Mother and the Son. They could not be induced to leave the cross, and when the body was taken away they followed it to the sepulcher and for a long time remained there weeping. And when the Sabbath, the great feast of the Hebrew Pasch, was passed, those blessed women were again as the day dawned at the sepulcher of the Master with sweet spices to discharge toward Him the last offices of love. And did not all these acts of affection and veneration

merit at least some return on the part of Jesus? Should not those apostles and disciples and those wonderful women have been consoled by a vision of His risen presence?

And here let us make an observation, trite enough in itself, but one that should be kept in memory. Who were the first persons to whom the risen Christ showed Himself? Here of course we put aside all mention of His mother, who undoubtedly was honored with His first apparition, though the Gospel makes no reference to it. The Gospel states that the first persons to whom the risen Christ appeared were precisely those women who had given such splendid proofs of their loyalty and affection, and of these He appeared first to Mary Magdalen. In a sense, then, it may be said that the apparitions of the risen Christ, and the order in which He granted them, bear upon them the character of a reward, since those persons were deemed most worthy of them who were most closely united to Him by the ties of faith and love.

And now I will give another reason in explanation of the economy of Christ in appearing exclusively to His friends and believers.

We have said it before and we repeat it again; the resurrection of Christ was the crown of all His miracles, the sovereign and incontrovertible proof of His divinity and, therefore, of His teaching; it was for this reason absolutely necessary that they

should be of all others the most certain of it, who were to bear witness to it. And were not these the apostles and disciples? As Jesus Christ had first taught them His doctrine, made them its chief depositaries and set them apart to announce it to others, so was it fitting that to them should be given the first and the chief proof of that doctrine, which they were to make known to the whole world, and this proof was His resurrection.

It may be, my friends, that a difficulty will come to your minds, which I hasten to state and solve. Why did not Jesus Christ, as soon as He had risen, show Himself in all His majesty to Annas and Caiphas, to Pilate and Herod, to those noisy crowds that shouted for His death, to those executioners who tore His body with scourges, nailed Him to the cross and feasted their eyes upon His agony and death? If on that solemn day of the Pasch Jesus had, instead of showing Himself to His apostles, now in one place and now in another, appeared openly on the great square of the Temple of Jerusalem at high noon, and if, radiant with light, He had said in a voice of thunder: "Ye leaders of the people and of the priests, and ye dwellers in Jerusalem, behold Me here risen. Draw near and examine Me closely. I am that Jesus whom only the day before yesterday you dragged through these streets from tribunal to tribunal; whom you savagely scourged, nailed to the cross,

and laid away in the grave. See the scars on these hands and feet, see this side that you tore open with the thrust of a lance; examine them and convince yourselves that I am He. I have risen, as I promised, and if you doubt it, or think that I am a shadow or a phantom, draw near Me, touch and handle My hands and feet, and then deny if you can the truth of My resurrection. And if you can not deny it, surrender to the truth, recognize My mission, believe My doctrine, and in Me adore the Son of God and the Saviour of the world."

And would not an apparition under such circumstances, would not such language, have conquered His enemies, dissipated every shadow of doubt, converted the whole city, gained a most noble and splendid triumph over the incredulity of the Jews and spared His apostles untold sufferings and martyrdoms? This is how we reason, this is how the world reasons, but divine Wisdom does not reason thus. Surely he would be a presumptuous man who would determine for Jesus Christ the most appropriate way for Him to show Himself and prove the reality of His resurrection. In this public and noisy exhibition of Himself, which we would prescribe to Christ, may be easily discovered a hidden pride, a secret desire for retaliation, and a solemn revenge, whose sweetness it almost breathes. Such thoughts, such base and ignoble motives, nursed and caressed by our pas-

sions and masked under a false zeal, could have no place with God or with His Son Jesus Christ.

God indeed desires the homage of our mind, and that He has a right to require it needs no demonstration; but it must be a rational homage, because we are rational beings; and it must be a free homage, because we are free beings. God does not constrain the will, He does not crush the intellect with the evidence of truth; if He should do so, where and what would be the merit of faith? If Christ risen had manifested Himself, as possibly we might think He should have done, with all that theatrical display of which we have just spoken, the evidence would have been so clear as to leave no room for faith, which, as St. Gregory says, ceases where the reason exercises full sway.

It was indeed fitting that Jesus Christ should put the fact of His resurrection beyond the reach of doubt, still leaving untouched the province of faith, some dark side, to humble the pride of reason. And hence, as you will observe, in all the apparitions recorded in the Gospel Christ so arranged things that, while His resurrection was quite certain, He never showed His body in glory as He did on Thabor, or as it is now in heaven. And for this reason, as I believe, He appeared now in the guise of a gardener, again as a pilgrim, again in the Cenacle as a teacher and a guest, and

again He was seen on the shores of the lake of Tiberias as one watching the fishermen.

Moreover we must take into account a law that God usually observes in distributing His gifts, and which St. James puts in these words: Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you.[1] He draws near to one who draws near to Him, and He gives of His gifts in the measure in which one is prepared to receive them, a law which the poet theologian thus expresses:

Tanto si da quanto trova d'ardore.

It is, of course, most certain that God makes the start, takes the first step toward man, without which man could not go toward Him; but having taken the first step toward man, God waits until man sets out toward Him. Now Jesus Christ had called all to draw near to Him, He had promised His resurrection to all, and the apostles and devout women in proclaiming over and over again, "*He is risen,*" had invited all, even His enemies, to satisfy themselves of the truth. Did they advance a step? Did they try to verify the fact? Did they join themselves to the apostles in order that they might see and hear Him? Did they pray that such a favor might be granted also to them? We do not read that they did any of these things; they would not hear anything about it; the chief priests and the ancients even cor-

[1] iv. 8.

rupted the soldiers, giving them money to say that Jesus was not risen, that His body, while they slept, was stolen by His disciples. Is it wonderful then, my friends, that Jesus did not show Himself to this obstinate people, a people hostile to the truth, or at least heedless of it, and that He restricted this signal favor to those who loved Him and sought Him and who did all they could to make themselves worthy of it?

My friends, for whom do you reserve the special tokens of your confidence? Whom do you admit to the secrets of your friendship? To whom do you open your hearts? To all indiscriminately? By no means. You do not confuse intimate friends with ordinary friends, or ordinary friends with strangers, or strangers with enemies who hate you. Prudence and justice alike forbid this; and while you love your enemies, as the Gospel bids you, the tokens of your special benevolence are reserved for those whom you most trust. And why should not Our Saviour have followed the same rule of justice and prudence? What right have we to say that He should have made no distinction between His trusted and beloved friends and those who were strangers to Him and many of whom were His enemies?

Not that He was not ready and desirous to bring them to a knowledge of the truth, for He died for all on the cross; but it was fitting that they should

in some way dispose themselves to receive it, for, as Christ says, it is not proper to cast pearls at the feet of those who trample on them, nor to confer upon them favors, by the abuse of which they become more culpable.

God in Sacred Scripture is called *light,* and Jesus Christ calls Himself *the Light of the world.* Without doubt He so calls Himself because between Him and material light there are many points of analogy and resemblance, which the Fathers and theologians have with great diligence sought out and illustrated. Light, as you know, while in itself it is one, contains all varieties of color; it diffuses itself so rapidly that it may be said to be everywhere at once;[1] it illuminates all things, the clean and the unclean, and is yet not defiled; it spreads everywhere, unless an obstacle intervenes; it penetrates, wherever it is permitted to penetrate, without effort and noiselessly.

As St. Ambrose very beautifully expresses it, if it finds the windows of a room open, it floods it; if it finds them half closed, it pours in as much as the opening admits; if there is only a small aperture, it enters through it, and marks its presence across the room by a luminous pencil or thread in which the smallest bodies may be seen floating and gorgeously colored; if the room is entirely closed it withdraws noiselessly and without effort and

[1]Light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles a second.

rests upon the outer walls, thus punishing him who has excluded it by leaving him in darkness, and patiently waits until the room is opened, when it again enters and begins once more its beneficent work, for which it asks neither thanks nor gratitude. Jesus Christ, the Man-God, did something similar during the days of His mortal life and in His apparitions after the resurrection. He did not show Himself to those who voluntarily shut their minds and hearts against Him; He left them in their ignorance; He respected their liberty even in the abuse they made of it, and He waited until, being in a better mind, they would open the door and give Him a welcome.

And do you fancy that if Annas and Caiphas, Herod and Pilate, and all those who had a hand in the condemnation and death of Jesus Christ, and had seen Him risen and clad in the effulgence of His glory, they would have believed in Him and have enrolled themselves among His disciples? This is a delusion, a noble and generous one, it may be, but still a delusion.

Why did not these men, if they were upright and disposed to embrace the truth, when the news went forth that Jesus had risen, set to work at once to make the necessary inquiries to verify the fact? Why did they not summon the apostles and the women, go straight to the spot, and set on foot an investigation to prove clearly that there was a

fraud or an hallucination, if fraud or hallucination there was; or failing in this, to satisfy themselves of what was narrated to them? Why did His enemies, the chief priests and the leaders of the people, as soon as the apostles had commenced to preach the doctrine of Christ and to appeal in confirmation of it to the fact of the resurrection, attempt to close their mouths by threats, scourgings, imprisonments, and by the most savage persecution, ending in banishment and death?

And would you have Christ present Himself risen and glorious to these men, who with their eyes open made war upon the truth, thus putting a premium upon obstinacy and unbelief?

But, you will say, their incredulity would have been overcome, the evidence afforded by the manifestation would have triumphed over it. This is also a delusion.

A little while before at Bethany, at the very gates of Jerusalem, Jesus had raised to life Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary Magdalen, after he had been four days in the grave. The fact was recent and notorious. There was Lazarus before their eyes; many to verify the fact had gone to Bethany; the witnesses to it were numerous, among them being some of the enemies of Jesus. So undoubted was the miracle that the Grand Council, summoned together to deliberate

on it, expressed themselves in these words: "What shall we do? This man doth many miracles."[1] Did they repent? Did they change their way of acting? Did they submit? Did they profess belief in Jesus Christ? Their anger flamed high and they determined to be rid of Him, cost what it might. "It is expedient," they said, "that one man should die . . . and from that day they devised to put Him to death."[2] Just so, Jesus wrought miracles; Jesus raised up Lazarus from the dead; there is no use denying these facts; there is nothing left but to murder Him! It was a delirium, if you will, but it was a delirium not uncommon in the human race. Jealousy, interest, political, and still worse, religious passion and hatred will drive men to close their eyes against the truth, to make war upon it, if possible to exterminate it, and to other excesses that seem incredible, were there not facts that can not be doubted to attest them. The passions are of all counselors to crime the most to be dreaded.

The rich glutton died and was buried in hell; Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The glutton from the flames of hell said to Abraham: "Have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in

[1]John xv. 47.
[2]Ibid. xi. 50, 53.

this flame." "No," said Abraham. Then said the glutton: "I beseech thee that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them lest they also come into this place of torments." Abraham answered: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." "But," said the glutton, "if one went to them from the dead they will do penance." Abraham replied: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead."[1] Those who, impelled by interest or pride, by hatred or any passion whatsoever, do not wish to believe, will always find some pretext for evading the evidence of truth, even though it should be confirmed by the most splendid miracles. Of this the Hebrews of old were examples. They had before their eyes the miracles of Christ, so numerous and generally known that they ought to have been verified, and could have been with the greatest facility. But what did they say? "This one breaks the Sabbath." "He is a sinner and can not work miracles." "He works miracles by the power of the devil." And addressing Him directly they bade Him show them a sign from heaven, as if miracles wrought on the earth were not easier to examine and verify than miracles wrought in the heavens. When finally it was impossible to deny

[1]Luke xvi.

the miracles of Christ they cried out: "Let us murder Him."

Had the enemies of Christ all come together on a certain day and at a certain place selected by themselves, and had He showed Himself to them in splendor and glory, what would they have said? Still under the influence of their prejudices, blinded by ferocious and implacable hatred and hurried along by pride, which would not permit them to acknowledge that they were vanquished by an enemy over whom they had gained a victory, they would, I believe, on seeing Him have cried out: "We are again the victims of a new deception, devised by a master hand. It is a phantom. We are under an hallucination. It is the devil's work. It is a play of light. It is a mirage. It is a mysterious phenomenon. It is anything you like, but it is not the risen Christ. Did not our fathers see in the midst of clouds armed battalions fighting?"

Be assured, my friends, that when men are determined to deny the truth and to explain facts to suit their own fancy, they always succeed; and very frequently they are not themselves deceived, but they deceive others.

What is more evident than the miraculous preservation of the Church, a fact which we have ever before our eyes? What is more manifest than the fulfilment of the prophecies of Christ in re-

gard to the destruction of Jerusalem; in regard to the dispersion and preservation of Israel in the midst of other peoples; in regard to the propagation of the Gospel and so many other events? What do freethinkers and unbelievers say of all this? They will not even hear of it. How many miracles have taken place from the time of Christ to our own, and are taking place at this very day? Are freethinkers and unbelievers affected by them? Do they set themselves to study them with a view either of explaining or of denying them? No; on hearing of them they only sneer and scoff and let fall some insolent remark.

They see thousands and thousands of men and women, who leave family and home and country to carry the Gospel among barbarous and savage peoples and with the Gospel the blessings of civilization; they see them toiling, suffering, and dying at their post, wearing out their lives in orphanages, hospitals, and in other refuges for the sorrowful and afflicted, without hope of other reward than what Christ promises them in the life to come. This is an abiding miracle of charity which no one can gainsay and which comes straight from Christ, and from no other source or cause. And what do scientific men and unbelievers say of it? Do they give themselves to study it? Do they acknowledge it? You know, as well as I, what they do. It will be a great deal if they

do not sneer and scoff at those heroes and heroines of charity, if they do not brand them as fanatics, if they do not brutally drive them out of those homes of suffering which their lives have filled with the fragrance of their virtues, and where they have wiped away so many tears and assuaged so much pain.

We repeat it, there is no divine manifestation, no matter how certain it may be or how solemnly attested, that men will not deny, when it is to their interest to deny it; and they would have denied the resurrection of Christ, even if He had appeared at a time and place designated by themselves. With good reason, then, did Jesus Christ limit the manifestation of His resurrection to the apostles, the disciples, and the devout women, upright and sincere souls, prepared to receive the truth; and deny this favor to those who were not prepared, who were hostile to Him, who hated Him, and who, had they seen the risen Christ, would have denied it and would have made it a text for malignant interpretations and a pretext for unbelief.

Still, it is urged, it remains that the only witnesses to the resurrection were the apostles, the disciples, and the pious women, all friends and confidants of Christ.

We should not forget Paul, who on his way to Damascus saw Christ, and while he was surely

neither a friend nor a confidant, his testimony, all things considered, is worth that of a hundred others.

And what matters it if the witnesses to the resurrection of Christ were all friends and confidants, provided that in number, in moral qualities, and in other conditions special to themselves, their testimony is such that it excludes all possibility of error or fraud; for did they not all affirm and seal with their blood that which they attested? Who casts any doubt upon the particulars of the death of Socrates? No one; and yet it is attested only by Plato and his disciples. Who would think of denying the retreat of the ten thousand Greeks from Persia or the achievements of Cæsar in Gaul? And yet one should not have known of them had not Xenophon and Cæsar, both of whom were interested in narrating them, left us an account of them.

There, then, can be no doubt concerning the resurrection of Christ arising from the fact that it was witnessed and recorded by His followers and friends, because there were special reasons why Christ should have showed Himself to them; because the testimony of His enemies was not necessary, nor was it proper or even possible for them, so perfidious were they, to give testimony; and finally because, if we have a right to require that the proofs of this great fact shall be manifest

and certain, we have no right to prescribe what these proofs shall be and say to God that they shall be done at such a time, in such a place, in such a way, that there shall be so many and of such a kind.

I will finish with a practical and useful consideration which I could wish were engraven on the tablets of your hearts.

In setting about any work, whether in the material, the intellectual, or the moral order, if it is not to fail we must begin by making some fitting preparation. This truth is evident and needs no demonstration. Hence the apostles should have made a fitting preparation before the great work of receiving the confirmation of the faith of Christ by means of the miracle of the Resurrection, and they did so by showing that they hoped in Him and desired to see Him, by their ardent love for Him, by the honor they paid to His body, by hastening to the sepulcher, by the spirit of fraternal charity which bound them together, and by the simplicity of their lives. They thus merited to see Jesus Christ risen, who, as the Prince of the apostles says, made Himself manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses preordained by God, to witnesses who were to make Him known throughout the whole world.[1]

[1] "Him God raised up the third day and gave Him to be made manifest, not *to all the people,* but to witnesses preordained by God (Acts x. 40-41). The words *preordained by God* are by some

Would we have Jesus Christ illuminate our minds with the light of faith, dwell in our hearts by His grace, and would we be His disciples? Let us open our minds and hearts to His grace and He will come to us, as He promised, and will make His abode within us.

interpreted *predestined*, by others *prepared*. I hold to the second interpretation as more in keeping with the context. Still the two interpretations, if properly understood, resolve themselves into one and the same.

DISCOURSE IV

Why Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?

The life of Jesus Christ is one chain, one accumulation of mysteries; or, to speak more accurately, it is one whole mystery. And how could it be anything else? Jesus Christ is the Man-God, and everything that He did in His human nature, at least in the light of faith, necessarily transcended all the powers of nature and human reason, and is therefore shrouded in the holy obscurity of mystery. The two culminating points of His life on earth are first, the Incarnation, which to us is, in a sense, all one with His birth; and, next, the Resurrection. In the Incarnation the seed was sown, in the Resurrection the fruit was gathered; in the former the foundation was laid, in the latter the edifice was completed and solidified; in the former the bark of His human life was launched on the tempestuous waves of this world, in the latter it was brought safe into port; in the former Jesus Christ entered upon a terrible duel with His enemy and ours; in the latter, having overcome the enemy, He achieved the most splendid of triumphs; in the former He entered into the womb of a virgin, was born, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid on a bed of straw; in the latter, filled with life and vigor, He

cast aside the winding-sheet, clothed Himself in glory and freely showed Himself where He would; at Bethlehem in the depth of winter and at dead of night He entered upon the stage of life and began His way of sorrows; at Jerusalem, when the flowers were in full bloom, at dawn of day, He came forth from the tomb and intoned a hymn of victory, and the whole world answered back with a shout of joy; at Bethlehem, attended by Mary and Joseph, a flight of angels gathered about His cradle and announced His birth to the shepherds; at Jerusalem the angels again did Him homage and announced His resurrection to the women and the disciples; at Bethlehem through angel voices He proclaimed peace to men of good will; at Jerusalem He saluted those dear to Him with the blessed words: "Peace be to you; again I say, peace be to you."

Let us lay aside the first miracle and occupy ourselves with the second, as the sacred rite of this day's feast enjoins. Jesus Christ rose as He had promised He would, and, death being overcome, to-day the paths of life are cleared, the gates of heaven are opened, the words of the prophets are fulfilled.

In these words, "Jesus Christ is risen," our faith is epitomized and our hopes are enshrined. Let us try to enter into this mine. The subject of my discourse is this: Why did Jesus Christ rise

from death to a new life? The answer to this question will be the subject that will engage my attention and yours.

Jesus Christ, being God-Man, did all things with infinite wisdom; the smallest act of His mortal life was numbered, and weighed, and measured, because it had to be worthy of Him. And, if so, how much more worthy of Him and of His sovereign wisdom should be the Resurrection, that work which was the complement and crown of all the others. Let us, then, reverently and in the light of faith approach this sublime mystery and search the reasons for it. Why, then, did Jesus Christ rise from the dead? The reasons are many and profound. St. Thomas, with his usual brevity and lucidity, gives them to us in a few lines. I shall try as best I can to explain them, following always his guidance.

It was necessary, he says, that Christ should rise in order that divine justice might triumph. Out of love for His Father and in obedience to His will Christ abased Himself unto death, even unto the death of the cross; it was therefore fitting that His father should exalt Him even to the glory of the Resurrection.[1]

[1]Necessarium fuit Christum resurgere. . . . Primo quidem ad commendationem divinæ justitiæ, ad quam pertinet exaltare eos qui se propter Deum humilitant. . . . Quia Christus propter charitatem et obedientiam Dei se humiliavit usque ad mortem crucis, oportebat quod exalteretur a Deo usque ad gloriam Resurrectionis. (Summa, p. 3, q. 53, a.1.)

If, my friends, you consider for a moment how we act ourselves and what our feelings impel us to do, you will understand the thought of the holy Doctor.

Here, say, is a father who has an only son, the model of every virtue and worthy of his best love. On a certain day this father finds himself with his son on the banks of a swollen river, whose waters are wild and threatening. In the middle of the river is a boat furiously buffeted by the waves, and in it is a number of persons, who, though they have received many and signal favors from both father and son, hate them with so ferocious a hatred, that even in the presence of death, not only do they refuse to call upon them for aid, but heap upon them insults and imprecations. The magnanimous father, heedless of the ingratitude, the hatred, and the indignities of those madmen, turning to his son, says: "Be quick, leap into the river and save those poor souls." The son, a son worthy of such a father, instantly leaps into the river and by superhuman efforts saves the lives of those unfortunate men, but at the cost of his own, he being the victim of his heroic courage. Gaze at him there on the bank of the river all livid and disfigured; the eyes are closed, the body is lifeless and motionless, the countenance is pallid, but full of gentle majesty, breathing a certain chaste grace, that inspires respect and reverence. The

father stands near the corpse and gathered about it is a throng of people who had witnessed the son's sublime sacrifice and who were familiar with his virtue. Now, I ask, if it were in the power of that father to infuse new life into the corpse of such a son; or if that crowd of people who had witnessed his heroism with amazement could by their wailing and prayers restore that martyr of obedience and charity to life, would not that young man instantly live again? What would not be done for one who so generously sacrificed his own life to save that of those who hated him and atrociously insulted him? Very well, then; while this is beyond the power of man, beyond even the love of a desolate human father, it is possible to God, and it is fitting that He should do it; both the love of God the Father for His Son by nature and the merits of the Son demand it.

When we men see one who is distinguished by every virtue and who, for the benefit of others, even of his enemies, sacrifices his possessions and his life, and not only his life, but what is dearer still than life, his honor, we are impelled in spite of ourselves, not only to esteem, admire, and love him, but to have every one else love, admire, and praise him. Who, when recalling the fate of Joseph, unjustly hated by his brothers, sold by them, calumniated, and cast into prison and languishing there, does not rejoice and bless God when

he sees him come forth from his cell, raised to a throne, recognized by his brothers on their knees before him, and acclaimed by all Egypt?

Jesus Christ, in order to save us, His enemies, and to give glory to His Father, voluntarily endured the most atrocious torments and the shame of Golgotha; He died upon the cross, abandoned by God and execrated by men; and could His Father do otherwise than restore to Him the life and the honor which He had sacrificed for Him?

He, the Son of God and of a virgin, was dragged through the streets of Jerusalem, from tribunal to tribunal, mocked as an impostor, a madman, a seducer of the people, a rebel, a false prophet, a usurper of the majesty of God, and as one upon whom every worst punishment should be inflicted. Behold His body disfigured, bloody, torn, bruised, no longer resembling a human body, and in contemplating it bear in mind that it is the body of the Son of God, and then, if you can, restrain your tears. Were it in our power, even at the cost of our own life, would we not restore life to that body and bowing down adore it? And if so, why should not His Father do as much? God has imposed it as a law upon Himself to exalt those who abase themselves for Him, to give glory to those who humble themselves for Him, and to give back life to those who offer theirs up for Him, and this law He observed in the case of His Son. O great

God and most holy Father, death has laid its cruel hands upon that blessed body, the very work of Thy omnipotence and wisdom, the incomparable production of Thy Holy Spirit, the abode of the purest soul that ever can or will exist, and wilt Thou permit it to become the food of the filthy brood of the sepulcher? Wilt Thou permit the soul of Thy own Jesus, Thine own Son, to remain longer separated from its body, its faithful and fitting companion? Canst Thou bear to see His soul up there in heaven, at Thy very side, flooded with joy and radiant with glory, while His body is being wasted on earth and its elements scattered to the four winds? Why wilt Thou delay to give to this immaculate body, that was rent and bruised for Thee, the honor and the glory that are its due, and why wilt Thou leave His soul incomplete?[1] No, no, remember Thy promise: "Thy Holy One shall not see corruption." Come, come, O Blessed Soul, that didst visit the abode of the dead and didst rejoice with Thy presence the patriarchs and the just of the Old Law, come, take up again that body, snatch it from the hands of death and carry it with Thee along the paths of life and confer upon it now that glory to which it has a right, and in which at the end of time all the bodies of the

[1]The soul alone is not perfect without the body, and St. Thomas in one place shows that it is fitting that bodies should rise again. He says it is inconceivable that an unnatural state should go on forever; the separation of the body from the soul is unnatural, and hence the body must be reunited to the soul.

elect will share. The Head should go before the members and open up that great highway of the resurrection which shall take place at the end of time.

Christ rose from the dead, and why? Listen again to our master, St. Thomas. "Christ rose from the dead to enlighten and strengthen our faith, because His resurrection confirms our faith in that palmary point of doctrine, His divinity."[1]

The salvation of the world is necessarily bound up with the teaching and the doctrine of Christ. This doctrine makes known to man his origin, his end, and the means of attaining it; it, and it alone, makes God known to him and the ties of duty that bind him to God and to His kind; it makes known to him what he should do and what he should shun; in a word it is a ready and certain means of making known to him all those truths which must be the rule of his intellect, of his will, and of his practical conduct in all conditions of life.

Now a ready, certain, and efficacious knowledge of all these truths depends absolutely upon the authority of the teacher who announces and imposes them. Take away the authority of the teacher and his doctrine and teaching are wavering and uncertain and man becomes like a boat

[1]Secundo: ad fidei nostræ instructionem; quia per ejus resurrectionem confirmata est fides nostra circa divinitatem Christi. (l.c.)

carried out to sea without oars or rudder, the sport of the winds.

And what sort of authority should be that of this teacher? It should be *absolute* and *perpetual,* such that it can stand against the most furious assaults of the passions and beget in the soul a certitude so great that it will sacrifice all things, and life itself, if need be, for the truth. Where, my brethren, can we find in the midst of the uncertainties of this life such an *absolute, perpetual,* and *unshaken* certitude, except in God? The teacher, then, of this doctrine must be God Himself. True, both before Christ and since His coming there have been numbers who announced truths which they claimed to be absolutely certain, and they were believed, though they were not God; but they always announced them in the name of another, who was to come, or who had already come, and who was worthy of absolute faith, because He was God, Our Lord Jesus Christ. In matter of fact the certitude of every truth announced from Adam and Moses down to the last Pontiff or priest who will live upon this earth rests upon the authority of Christ. It is as if a colossal pyramid were inverted and set upon its apex, as its base. If, then, Christ exacts from all an unshaken faith in His doctrine, He must prove His authority and prove it beyond all question of doubt. Now by what arguments can He

prove it? He can not certainly say that His doctrine can be comprehended by reason alone, since for the most part it wholly transcends the powers of reason. How, then, can He prove it? He can prove it by miracles, and these are arguments accessible to all, arguments that can not be refuted, and of which during His mortal life He wrought a countless number, that were the admiration of all.

Now which was the miracle that was incomparably superior to all the others, in which all the others centered, to which as to a supreme proof He appealed, and which He flung as a challenge in the face of His enemies? You know, for it is recorded in the Gospels; it was His resurrection. This, considered in itself and in its accompanying circumstances—considered as a manifestation of divine power and as the fulfilling of a prophecy distinctly made by Christ Himself, to the effect that after He had been murdered and laid away in the grave He would Himself rise from the dead on a fixed day—was and is a miracle such that none other is comparable to it, and it is so bound up with all other miracles that, if it is certain and indubitable, all the others are also certain and indubitable, and if it does not stand the test all the others are doubtful, and with them the authority of Christ fails, and hence also the foundation upon which His doctrine rests and the whole edifice of the Christian religion is but a

mass of ruins. Hence we may say that in a sense Christ has reduced all the proofs of His mission and of His divine origin, and therefore of His religion, to the fact of His resurrection; and St. Paul was right in saying to the Corinthians, "If Christ be not risen our preaching is vain and your faith is vain."[1] The Resurrection is, then, the basis of our faith, the cornerstone of our religion, the seal of the divinity of Jesus Christ. You will understand, therefore, the supreme necessity of His resurrection to so confirm our faith in Him that it will be able to bear up against the assaults of all enemies combined to overthrow it. Against this faith everything is powerless—time, and brute force, and science, and the most daring and subtile criticism, because it is both an historical and a supernatural fact that defies the attacks of every age and the arguments of all science present and to come leagued together to demolish it. What we have said in a former Discourse will be our excuse for not dwelling longer here on this fundamental truth.

Let us listen again to the Angel of the Schools. Why did Christ rise? To animate our hope, since seeing Christ, our Head, rise, we too hope some day to rise.[2]

[1]Cor. xv. 14.

[2]Tertio, ad sublevationem nostræ spei, quia dum videmus Christum resurgere, qui est caput nostrum, speramus et nos resurrecturos. (l.c.)

What is the life of any Christian on earth? It is an incessant warfare, a continuous martyrdom, a warfare and a martyrdom not alone of the spirit, but of the body also. Every Christian must, as Christ did, face this warfare and martyrdom. But in order to be able to sustain so furious a warfare and to endure so cruel a martyrdom, ending only with life, there must be a reward adequate to the exertion.

I do not deny that virtue is beautiful and attractive in itself and that occasionally there may be found men who practise it without being allured by the reward that is promised it and is its due; but virtue so exalted and minds so noble and generous are exceedingly rare.

Where will you find a workman who will drudge and toil his whole life long without being assured of a reward? Where is the farmer that will endure heat and cold, follow the plow and handle the spade day in and day out without the hope of reaping a plentiful harvest? What keeps man to his work and enables him to endure fatigue, either physical, moral, or intellectual, is the thought ever before him that in the end he will be amply compensated and rewarded. Take away the hope of reward and you sever the nerves of the will and man refuses to endure toil and fatigue. This is his nature.

Jesus Christ, having come upon earth to with-

draw men from the paths of sin and to start them on the paths of virtue, the former smooth, wide, and strewn with flowers, the latter rugged, narrow, and filled with thorns and thistles, must necessarily hold out to him some reward that will rejoice and encourage him. True, man knows that his soul of its very nature is immortal and that it will not fail of the reward that is its due. But man is also a being of sense, and only what appeals to and strikes the senses operates powerfully upon the will. It is necessary, then, to set before him some reward which is proper to the body, the faithful companion of the soul, and all the more so since man may the better judge from the reward prepared for the body that which is prepared for the soul. We are so constituted that we wish to see and, as it were, touch with the hands the recompense that is promised us and to which we think we have a right; and if we do not see it, if we have it not under our hands, and it is only promised in the remote future, it makes only a slight and passing impression upon us. And this is why men, even believing, pious, and devout Christians, not infrequently give themselves up to a life of pleasure and sin; they do not realize to themselves the chastisement of sin and the reward of virtue, these being distant and in a remote future; and hence they prefer to fly pain and enjoy present pleasure, even at the risk of storing up

sorrow for themselves and forfeiting joy, although they know that the latter, as compared with the former, is immeasurably superior. Now the resurrection of Christ admirably supplies this exigency of our nature.

Since, then, we must, while treading the rugged path of duty and virtue, fix our eyes upon the recompense which we shall receive for the privations, toils, and sufferings to which we necessarily subject our bodies, let us contemplate the body of our Head, our great captain, Jesus Christ. We see it come forth suddenly from the darkness of the tomb, where it lay like some powerful athlete resting after a furious struggle; we see it united to its blessed soul, and by it renewed, overflowing with life, agile in motion, swift as thought, exempt from every need, subject neither to infirmity nor debility, impassible, spiritual, and as the Apostle says, overflowing with delights. Let us see ourselves mirrored in Him and reflect that one day we shall have bodies like to His, provided we pursue the path that He has traced out. If we suffer with Him and for Him, with Him and through Him we shall rise again, since the members must be united with their Head. When we impose fasts and abstinences upon our bodies, when we deny them gratifications, ease, and delicacies; when we are forced to suppress their clamorous and fierce temptations; when in short we are bound to keep

them under the yoke of the law, and they murmur and protest, let us think of the risen Jesus, of the glory with which our bodies will one day be clothed, of the pure and holy joy that will one day be theirs; let us take courage, animate our hopes, and resolutely go forward in the way of the cross. So also Christ, says the Apostle, endured the shameful death of the cross, keeping before Him the glorious recompense laid up for Him by the Father, "*Who having joy set before Him endured the cross.*"

Let us go again to the feet of the Angelic Doctor. "Christ rose from the dead, and why? To set before His faithful apostles a pattern of life to which theirs should be conformed, as the Apostle says: 'That as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life.'" And again: "Knowing that Christ rising from the dead dieth no more, so do you also reckon that you are dead to sin but alive unto God."[1]

In Jesus Christ we should distinguish two lives; the first passible, mortal, and in everything, sin alone excepted, like unto ours; the second impassible, immortal, and glorious; the first began with His conception and ended with His death; the

[1]Quarto, ad informationem vitæ fidelium, secundum illud: Quomodo Christus resurrexit a mortuis propter gloriam Patris, ita et nos in novitate vitæ ambulemus. Et infra: Christus resurgens ex mortuis iam non moritur; ita et vos existimate mortuos peccato, viventes autem Deo. (l.c.)

second began with His resurrection and will never end. This two-fold life of Christ is, my friends, a figure of ours. You will ask how? In this way:

Jesus Christ suffered and died for our sins, expiating them in His own person. As a bailsman He took upon Him our sins, and with them the chastisement due to them. The supreme punishment due to our sins was death, and hence Jesus Christ in dying on the cross extinguished in Himself our sins, so that He had nothing more to do with them. He died to sin, as the Apostle says. This strong and energetic phrase of the Apostle means that as a dead body has nothing in common with the things on earth, to which it is as insensible and indifferent as if they did not exist, so also was it with Christ as regards sin. He was dead to sin, that is, He was in respect to sin as a corpse to the objects by which it is surrounded. So also we, my friends, ought to be dead to sin and sin to us; between us and sin there ought to exist only a relation that exists between a corpse and the things about it. A corpse neither sees nor feels them, neither seeks them nor loves them; it can make no use of them; in a word it is dead to them. Death has put between it and all things a wall of separation; it has dug an abyss that can not be crossed; between it and them no relation of any sort will ever be possible. So we, too, in

regard to sin ought to look upon ourselves as dead: *"So do you also reckon that you are dead to sin."* Christ did not live over again His mortal life, and never will; *"Christ rising from the dead, dies no more."* That life is gone forever; it ceased with death; *"Death shall no more have dominion over Him."* So also we, having come out from the death of sin, having parted from it, as the body by death parts from the world, let us not again pass under its dominion; let us not take upon us again its shameful yoke: *"So do you also reckon that you are dead to sin."*

As Jesus Christ by death parted for good and all from the first life, so by the Resurrection He entered upon a second life, a new life, a blessed and glorious life, a life that will never end.

Like unto the new life of the divine body of Jesus Christ, should be the new life of His members, which we believers and disciples are. And what does a new life, or newness of life, as the Apostle, using a Hebrew idiom, expresses it, mean? What does it imply? He tells us at once in the beautiful words that immediately follow: *"But alive unto God."*

Take a small tree, for instance; it sinks its roots into the earth, draws from it the humors and the sap that give it life and vigor; it lives of the earth and from the earth, and brings forth fruit that bears an affinity to the nature of the earth. Now

take up that tree and plant it elsewhere; in the new earth it again strikes its roots, grows strong and vigorous and produces fruit partaking now of the character of the new soil. Is not that tree dead to the old soil and living to the new? Its nature has not changed, it is ever the same; it has only changed food, climate, air, and local conditions; it has transferred its life from one place to another, and in this latter it continues to develop its natural forces and growth.

This, according to the teaching of the Apostle, cited by St. Thomas, is what we ought to do. We should lay hold of the little plant of our soul, pull it out of the soil in which it has taken root, the soil of self-love, passion, and sin, make it dead to this soil by transplanting it into other and better ground, much better, the ground of truth, justice, and virtue, God's garden, and there let us live and bring forth fruit unto eternal life. This is what is meant by dying with Christ to sin and rising with Christ from death and living unto God: *"So do you reckon that you are dead to sin and alive unto God. So we also may walk in newness of life."*

St. Thomas asks again: "Why did Christ rise from the dead?" And he answers, giving his last reason, which is this: "Christ rose to complete our salvation, for as He endured torture and death to free us from evil, so was He glorified in His

resurrection to procure for us all good.'"[1] The redemption wrought by Christ consists of two essential parts, the one inseparable from the other; the first, to free us from sin and from the evils which come from sin; and the second, to restore to us His grace and with it all goods of body and soul, both in this life and the life to come; for of all these goods He is the unfailing source. He deals with us as does a physician with a patient. A physician must drive from the body of the patient the cause of the sickness, expel the noxious humors, and restore its lost strength and energy. What would one avail without the other? Man was sick, aye more than sick—he was dead to grace and to God. Jesus Christ took upon Himself the chastisement due to man; He became his bailsman, and hence He must suffer and die, and suffer and die He did. The justice of God was satisfied beyond what the debt and justice required; the fatal poison, that had been the death of man, was expelled from his system and all the evils that come from sin were vanquished. Jesus Christ by His death has extinguished the whole debt of man and destroyed sin: *"Who was delivered up for our sins. Who died for us."* Behold that body, bruised, wasted, and disfigured, no longer resem-

[1]Quinto ad complementum nostræ salutis, quia sicut per hoc quod mala sustinuit (humiliatus est) moriendo, ut nos liberaret a malis, ita glorificatus est resurgendo, ut nos promoveret ad bona. (l.c.)

bling the body of a man. O justice of God, thou art finally satisfied, and with infinite usury; thou art placated; the blows that ought to have fallen upon the accursed race of Adam have fallen upon this innocent and holy victim and crushed out His life. But is this the completion of the redemption of those for whom Jesus Christ suffered and died? No; this redemption is not yet complete. What would the death of Jesus avail, if where death reigned, life did not reign in its stead? What would it avail to dig a capacious canal, if the life-giving waters did not flow through it? What would it avail to expel from soul and body the poison that had been the death of both, if the current of life did not again enter in where death had been? We children of Adam had lain under the iron hand of death; we were its prey and its food. Jesus Christ died for us. May He be ever blessed! But if He is not risen again of what avail is His death to us? We must live and life comes only from Jesus, who is life itself. But how will or can life come from Him to us, if He Himself lives not, if He lies a corpse in a grave? What can we hope from a corpse? O divine Word, Thou that didst not quit for an instant, either the body or the soul which Thou didst take to Thyself in the womb of the most holy of creatures, bring back, bring back the pilgrim soul to its old abode, let it take possession of it and dominate it and

fill that corpse with fresh, new life. When that body shall live again we, too, shall live of its life; its exuberant life shall go out to us all, and "*of its fulness we shall all receive.*" And so it was and is, for, as the Apostle says: "As in the first Adam all die, so in Christ, the second Adam, all shall be made alive." He is the first-born of the dead, that is, He is the first to die and rise again to die no more, and therefore the first-fruits of the risen.

Fancy a vast desert plain on which there is not a vestige of vegetation, a desolate land where all is death. A bird in passing over it in its flight lets fall a tiny seed; this ferments and grows, shoots up, develops into a large and prolific tree with wide-spreading branches. Is it not true that that dreary, forsaken land will in a long course of years be covered with trees, whose cool shade and sweet fruit will afford shelter and food to the wayworn traveler? How did life come to cover that arid plain of death? It came from that first seed of life that fell from on high and that propagated marvelously. As in the past on this earth, so in the present; we see the hot breath of sin blight and extinguish every trace of life in the soul. The hand of God dropped there a tiny seed in which was enshrined a divine life; the seed died, in dying developed new life, produced other seeds, and these grew and still grow, and cover the face

of the earth. This is an image that Christ Himself used in speaking of His death and resurrection. By His death He killed sin, and by killing sin He killed death; by His resurrection He poured new life, first into His own body, and through it He diffuses this life in every age over all the earth.

My brothers and most dear children, when the day was dying and the darkness was coming on, Jesus died on the cross, as if He would hide with the material darkness and the darkness of the tomb the more frightful darkness of sin. At the first dawn of day, as the first faint light rejoiced the earth, He came forth from the sepulcher, as if to intimate that with the light of day He brought with Him the light of truth, the light of the second life, and the light that will never set. So, my brothers and sons, let us be up and doing. As with Christ, we are dead to sin forever, so with Christ let us rise to-day to live to God and to God alone.[1]

[1]The St. Thomas (l.c. Art. 2), where he inquires why Christ rose the third day and in the morning.

DISCOURSE V

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ A Unique Miracle

Because He Began to Display the Greatest Power at a Time when the Power of Other Men Ceases

THE day was dawning. The sky was clear and tranquil; the stars, still shining in the firmament, had commenced to grow dim, and the fragrant air, sweet with the perfumes of April, was murmuring through the leaves. The birds were stirring and from the near-by trees joyously saluting with the music of their voices the new-born day. Some women, their faces still wet with weeping, bowed with grief, but resigned and tranquil, were silently and swiftly ascending the slopes of Calvary. They bore with them sweet spices to put about the body of Him they so loved, a last tribute of their piety and tender affection. As they went up the hill Jerusalem lay to one side, Jerusalem, the holy city, but now a city laden with guilt of the most horrible crime that had ever been consummated under the sun. The city was still silent, its inhabitants were still sleeping; the pinnacles of the Temple could be seen above the gray mist that enveloped it, and seemed like giants coming up out of the darkness. The pious and trembling

women were now near the sepulcher; their hearts were beating in their bosoms; and now and then they stopped, and listened, peering into the distance. They feared the guards and, confused and uncertain what to do, they whispered one to another: "Who will roll away the stone at the mouth of the sepulcher?" At that instant the entire hill reeled, the ground under their feet rocked to and fro like a ship tossed by the waves; the earth had given up the treasure committed to it; the frightened guards had run away. Jesus had risen and the avenues of life were open. The bewildered and trembling women, seized with fright, were about to turn back and flee; but made strong and daring by the love that possessed them, doubtful and hesitating, they drew near to the sepulcher. They looked up, and, O wonder of wonders, the great stone that had closed it lay rolled away on the ground, and two angels in dazzling light standing beside the sepulcher said to them: "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here; He is risen; go, tell the disciples that He is risen and will go before them into Galilee." Beside themselves with amazement and alternating between fear and hope and joy, they ran to seek the apostles. Possibly Mary Magdalen remained behind at the sepulcher, weeping and sighing, unable to tear herself away from that rock in whose bosom her treasure had been

enclosed, and possibly, too, it was then she heard her name called by Him, whom she mistook for the keeper of the garden, and threw herself at His feet to kiss them. Then came John and Peter and found the sepulcher empty. That same day toward evening Jesus showed Himself to the two disciples on their way to the near-by town of Emmaus, and then to Peter, and then to the ten apostles gathered together in the Cenacle, and said to them: "Peace be to you." All this took place on the day of the Pasch, a day of unspeakable joy for the apostles, who had been but awhile before so troubled and dismayed.

Let us for a moment stand beside the open tomb from which the Author of Life has just come forth. There was never on this earth, is not now, and never will be again, a tomb as famous and venerated as this. Before this tomb millions of men have come from the remotest quarters of the globe, from nations the most civilized and powerful, and have reverently knelt down; that cold rock has been covered with kisses and tears so numerous that God only can count them; here century after century the formidable armies of the East and the West threw themselves furiously against each other and in turn took and retook those few feet of earth; and here, it may be, at no distant time, powerful armies will again meet and decide the future destinies of nations. This open grave

guarded by angels and coming out from which Jesus Christ launched this unprecedented challenge against death; "O death where is thy victory, O death where is thy sting?" calls to memory the resounding miracle of His resurrection and with it the abiding miracle of His power, which I will take for my subject, and this I will state in these few words: Jesus Christ, by an example absolutely unique in the history of the human race, began to show forth His power and undertook the most stupendous and the most impossible of all works, precisely where other men bring their most insignificant works to an end. Listen and then judge if what I say is not true.

Life, or what is the same, all the power and energy of man, is inexorably bounded by two points, namely by birth and death, by the cradle and the grave. Before birth man was not and therefore could do nothing; a moment after death he is, as regards us on this earth, first a corpse, next a skeleton, and finally a handful of dust, which is powerless and which the wind will scatter. The greatest geniuses, the most powerful monarchs, men who have electrified whole peoples and made nations tremble, decay in the grave and are no more. This is the goal, the supreme limit of all earthly greatness and power.

On rare occasions there is a splendid funeral and stately formalities about the grave; words

of praise are spoken, incense is burned, wreaths of flowers are laid upon the tomb, sincere tears are shed, and majestic monuments are set up. Possibly some tombs may be shrines to which pilgrims come, some attracted by piety, others by curiosity and possibly, too, jets of light may be seen to issue from some graves, pale and uncertain flickerings that go wandering from grave to grave and then are suddenly quenched forever; then all is over, all is silence, a solemn eternal silence. No matter how great and wise and powerful you may have been, there will be only barren words spoken by those who gather about your bier; their tears will not put a single pulse of life into your withered members, their praises will not stir an echo in the silence of your tomb. The tomb swallows up all power, arrests all motion, cuts off all hope, makes even the most trifling action impossible. Cæsar and Alexander, Hannibal, Tamerlane, Charles the Great and Napoleon, while living kept the world in a tumult; but when dead they could not move a hand, nor was there a single one to do anything for them. This is a universal and absolute law.

To this law there is, in all the history of mankind, one single, solitary exception, and this exception the sacred and solemn rite of this day commemorates. The day before yesterday, as darkness was setting in, by the uncertain light of torches

the mangled and bloody body of Jesus was tenderly laid away by the disciples and the women in a grave cut out in the living rock. His enemies and murderers sealed the stone of the grave, set a guard about it, and rejoicing in their victory went their way. Jerusalem took on its accustomed appearance, and its streets were crowded with its citizens and with strangers who had come up to the city to celebrate the Jewish Pasch.

Jesus, the prophet, the wonder worker, the scourge of hypocrites, the teacher of the people, hailed as the promised Messias, was no more; His bloodless body lay yonder under the marble, still guarded by the soldiers of his suspicious enemies; the disciples were dispersed and frightened. The people, fickle alike in their loves and in their hatreds, had forsaken Him, and the enemy had come off victorious in the trial of strength. No one dared to avow himself the disciple of the crucified and buried Galilean; only a few women came stealthily to mourn at His grave. All was over. And what of the promised kingdom of the Church He was to found? of the challenge He had flung in the face of His enemies: "After three days I will rise again. When I am lifted up on the cross I will draw all things to Me"?

My friends, let us by an effort of the imagination fancy ourselves near that grave just before the Resurrection, and let us fancy that others, point-

ing to that blessed body, wrapped in clean linen and sweet spices, had spoken thus: "This is the sacred body of Jesus Christ; in a little while He will rise, quick as a flash of lightning; He will gather about Him His scattered apostles; at first they will not believe their eyes, then they will believe in the truth of His resurrection; in repeated apparitions He will recall to their minds the truths He taught them. These miserable men, so timid, uncouth, rude, and ignorant, will be transformed; full of courage, in strange contrast with their nature and past behavior, they will go down into the streets of Jerusalem and announce the doctrine of their Master, appealing as their sanction for doing so to the fact of the Resurrection; this they will affirm before the people and the priests, before the chiefs of the Sanhedrim, who demanded the death of Jesus, and who can by a nod have these men cast into prison and mercilessly scourged. The same apostles, who but a little while ago did not dare show themselves in public, are to found here in Jerusalem the first Church; then they will extend their preaching throughout all Judea and Samaria; they will next set out to conquer all the Roman world, dividing it among them; some will go toward the East as far as India, others will traverse Egypt, Asia Minor, and Greece; they will coast along the shores of Africa and Spain, and still others will take up their abode in Rome, the

center of the civil and political world, the very heart of Paganism; and finally after infinite efforts, after incredible labors and persecutions, after having suffered hunger and thirst, exile and imprisonment, after having been scourged and shipwrecked, insulted and reviled, these same apostles will die by the sword of the executioner, and the last cry that will escape their lips will be this: "Jesus, is risen from the dead; we ourselves were witnesses to it; He is God, and therefore His doctrine is true, and we gladly lay down our lives for Him."

Now the work accomplished by these men, a little while ago so impotent, fills five continents; commenced nineteen hundred years and more ago, the Church is here before our eyes; she is daily growing and widening her boundaries prodigiously, and in growing old her youth is ever renewed. Evidently the future is hers; of this the past is a guarantee; the whole earth will be her conquest.

Now let me ask, whence did this unheard-of transformation of the apostles, and the still more unheard-of work undertaken and accomplished by them, receive their first impulse? How were they brought about? Whence the first beginnings of that fire whose flames envelope the whole earth? Whence issued the breath of life that invested, penetrated, and transformed all Christian nations? All was set in motion from that sepulcher;

the immense, the impossible work, that we see with our eyes and touch with our hands, had its first beginnings from Christ, but not until after His death, not until He had risen and belonged no longer to this earth. While He was living His mortal life He stirred all Palestine with the power of His words; He preached, He wrought miracles, and yet He with difficulty gathered about Him a small band of poor disciples; but after He had died, and risen again, and gone out from the midst of men, the whole world ran after Him. When all was lost, everything was gained; when Jesus had ceased to work visibly He transformed all things; at the moment of greatest impotence was commenced the work of greatest power. Different from the greatest men and conquerors who had ever lived, He came and triumphed after He had died; where others end He began; where the sun of others sets forever His was just rising above the horizon; where others die He began to live. When or where was there ever seen so marvelous, so incredible an event? The kingdom of Christ, the universal kingdom of all ages, the kingdom that has not and never will have anything like to it, came forth with Christ from the tomb. The cry, "Jesus is risen," changed and is still changing the face of the world; it pulled down Paganism, it transformed laws, customs, arts, sciences, in a word, everything, and we, gathered here nineteen

centuries after that event, hear the same cry, and filled with living, ardent faith we repeat and sing: "*He is risen.*" This is the accomplishment not of one dead, but of one whose life is perennial; it is the work of Christ. Let us acknowledge Him and adore Him as such; He is truly the Son of God.

The kingdom of Christ began after His death; but what sort of a kingdom was it, my friends? A kingdom the like of which men had never dreamed. Jesus Christ, having died and departed out of this world, still reigns over the minds and hearts of men, and therefore over their actions, and so reigns that His most absolute authority is combined with the greatest liberty. The subject is so large that I shall only touch on it. You will kindly follow me.

What is meant by reigning and governing? It means to take hold of all the powers of men one by one, to fix a goal that they must reach, and to lead them on to it. Society, if it has not one who holds it together, guides, and directs it, is like a ship without pilot or helm, tossed to and fro by the waves and finally sinking into the depths of the sea. To rule and to govern supposes a supreme power that directs and guides men, not capriciously, for this would be tyranny, but according to fixed and reasonable laws, and that guides them to a common and worthy end.

Now consider Jesus Christ. He presents not to this man or to that, not to this people or to that, but to all without distinction or exception a certain body of doctrines, precise and taught by Himself. These are to be the rule of thought and action; they are to make their way into the inmost recesses of the heart and regulate its affections and desires. These doctrines are presented to all and all must accept them, profess them, and reduce them to practice. All equally must give to these doctrines the fullest and most absolute assent, and assent such that it excludes any shadow of doubt, so that if necessary they would die for them.

What proofs does Jesus Christ give of these truths? Does He demonstrate them by reason? In themselves many of them are not demonstrable, because they transcend the powers of the human mind and are wrapped in a veil of impenetrable mystery; while others, though demonstrable by reason, could not be so demonstrated by most men, incapable as they are of dealing with subtle arguments.

How, then, can He exact of all minds this absolute assent? By brute force? You all know that brute force has no power over the sanctuary of the conscience; and if there is anything that more than another makes the conscience of man rebel and indignantly spurn a doctrine, it is to attempt to

thrust it upon him by force. On the other hand Christ, though He was omnipotent, never made use of material force to subjugate the intellect. The faith that He exacts must be worthy of Him, and therefore it is not the result of constraint, but is a free, deliberate homage.

How, then, can He demand and impose a most firm and unhesitating assent to His doctrines? He has proved His divine mission by works and hence He says to every man: "You must firmly believe everything that I teach, although you do not and can not comprehend it; you must believe it upon My word, and My word alone."

And this absolute, steadfast, and abiding homage has been, and is, given to Jesus Christ at the cost of infinite sacrifices by millions and millions of intellects. During two thousand years the most civilized peoples of the globe have accepted His creed and His commandments, while barbarians and savages ceased to be barbarous and savage as long as they submitted their intellects to Him, and fell again into barbarism and savagery when they rose in revolt against Him.

We all know that there have been men of genius, who created schools and gathered about them loyal and ardent disciples; these embraced the teachings and became the apostles of their masters; but they became the disciples of those masters because they comprehended, or thought

they comprehended, the doctrines taught them, and because these doctrines did not transcend the powers of their minds. Their number, however, was limited to a few men of talent, their schools lasted only for a time and then disappeared; and they were never forced to face serious dangers. But what comparison is there between these few men of great genius, who dominated over the minds of a handful of disciples by the charm of their eloquence and the power of their minds, and Jesus Christ, who for so many centuries has reigned over millions of millions of minds at the cost of untold sacrifices by this simple word: *"Believe"?* The world has never seen and never will see a fact, I will not say equal to it, but bearing any resemblance to this; namely, that intellects beyond all count and among the greatest that have honored and dignified the human race, belonging to every clime and to every age, have voluntarily welcomed and received from Christ doctrines the most difficult and onerous on His sole word, have clung to them tenaciously as to the most precious of treasures, and have not hesitated to pour out their blood rather than give them up. What a spectacle! What a prodigy of moral strength!

And consider again that Christ, from whom these doctrines come, can not be seen with the eyes, or His voice heard by the ears of the body.

Every one knows that a man of genius can by his look, by the energy and inflection of his voice, by his mere presence at times subdue, fascinate, and rule at will the minds and hearts even of his adversaries; it is the secret of genius, of which he himself is unconscious or which he can not explain; but let his teachings be set forth to men by the agency of others, by his disciples, rude, poor, and weak, and they at once lose both their power and their charm. But as regards Jesus Christ all this is different. His teachings after traversing so many centuries, after passing over countries so wide in extent, and after being repeated over and over again times without number by men weak, ignorant, inexperienced, and despised, still retain the same power, work the same transformations, as when announced by Himself. Jesus, though invisible, by His doctrine still moves, rules, governs the intellects of men, and leads them on powerfully yet gently to the same goal. They may withdraw themselves from His authority, but if they do chastisement soon overtakes them; if they rise in revolt against Him, they fall into doubt, go round and round in a fatal circle, lose all peace, and know not whence they started or whither they are going. To minds that separate from Him everything is obscure; they are like men who close their eyes to the light of day, like stars that leave their orbits and rush wildly through the interminable spaces

of the firmament. Jesus is, then, the true king of intellects! May He ever rule over them, may His word ever fill them with its music, may His light ever shine upon them.

My friends, a wonderful power, known as the intellect, resides in the soul, and from it our thoughts, infinite in number, leap forth like living sparks. The intellect, like a magnetic needle, is poised upon the point of our spirit, and ever turns to the pole of truth. And if after putting the hand on the forehead, where the intellect seems to be enthroned, we carry it down to the breast, we shall feel the beatings of the heart. There another force resides, still more wonderful, to which the former is related as a means to an end and in which is completed all that is great and noble in our nature. This is the will, from which, as from a perennial and living fountain, our affections flow forth in streams. To hold sway over the intelligence is to hold sway over only the half of man, or rather I should say, it is to hold sway over the power that does not wield the scepter of authority. The will resides in the depths of the soul, and it shuts itself up as behind an impregnable rock in its inmost recesses, and from there it challenges any force from without, and may with perfect security refuse to accede to the requests, the demands, and the most urgent appeals of the intellect; nay, it can, if it so wills, force the intellect to follow

whither the intellect protests it does not want to follow. And how frequently this happens. How often man says to himself: "I see the good and I approve, but I turn to the worse, because my will leads me on."

How is the will overcome? How is the heart gained? By threats or fear? Never. Fear may impose silence on the heart, may prevent its outpourings of love and affection, but it can never make it its slave. You may, if you will, put a man in irons, handcuff him, close his mouth, point a sword at his breast, and threaten to drive it into his heart if he does not yield, and he will say, as did the early Christians to emperors: "No, I will never yield; take everything I have, thrust me into prison, put me in chains, buffet and scourge me, do what you will with my body, of that you are masters, but of my heart and will you shall never be masters." Fear, brute force, power, even supreme power, can not subdue the will and gain the love of man. Can gold? It is said that everything obeys gold, but this is only an emphatic expression, nothing more. Cast at the feet of man treasures upon treasures, offer him all the world's wealth, the crowns of monarchs and universal dominion as the price of his love; it will be a terrible temptation, I know, but still he has it in his power, if he will, to say resolutely and to your face: "No; keep your treasures, your wealth, and your crowns; I

will have none of them, nor will I give up my love, never."

Can even knowledge make a conquest of the love of men? Knowledge commands respect, it creates esteem, it excites admiration and even enthusiasm; we willingly bow before a man of eminent learning, it is a natural tribute; but even learning is unequal to the conquest of the heart. We admire Plato and Demosthenes, Galileo, Volta, and all the great geniuses of science and art, but can we be said to love them? Where are the hearts that beat for them, that consecrate themselves to them? Name them if you can.

If it is impossible either by force or by power, by fear, by gold, or by learning itself to make a conquest of the heart, tell me by what road, by what means entrance may be gained into that fortress and possession of it secured? We were once little children and we remember that morning by morning a woman with a face all smiles and radiant with joy came and bent over us, laid a caressing hand upon our forehead, took us into her arms, pressed us to her heart, and covered us with kisses; then we felt welling up from our hearts a wave of tenderness; it was our very heart, which, conquered by love, gave itself wholly and with inexpressible joy to her who had gained it by love. This sweet outpouring of the heart, beginning in the cradle, goes on enlarging its circuit; first it

embraces the members of the family, then, crossing the threshold of the home, it embraces friends, benefactors, and souls that seem worthy of our love. What was the spark that kindled and still kindles in us the flame of love, of the true and chaste love, that dominates the heart? It was and it ever will be another's love, a true love, pure and chaste; for a guilty love does not rule the heart, it tyrannizes over it, lacerates it, murders it. Only love draws hearts to itself and binds them to it, only love triumphs over hearts.

It is manifest, my friends, that this triumph of love over hearts will be in the measure of its breadth, its duration, its immensity, of the sacrifices of which it is capable, and of its purity.

In the Gospel Jesus Christ says over and over again that His whole law is comprised in love of Him and of our neighbor for His sake. It is unnecessary to cite the passages. What He asked He obtained, but in what measure as regards breadth, or the space through which that love was and is diffused? There is no limit to its diffusion. There is not a city or kingdom, island or continent, there is not a region, no matter how remote or inhospitable, where Jesus Christ has not followers, who believe in Him and love Him.

Let an object drop into a large vessel filled with water and from the point where it strikes the

water the circles go on increasing in size toward the circumference, one following the other, but decreasing in volume until finally they disappear altogether. Fire off a cannon and the roar is deafening, but the resounding wave of sound as it widens gradually lessens and finally is heard no more. Again, the sun pours out light and heat in torrents, but the intensity of both decreases in proportion to the distance from their source. But the reign of Christ over the hearts of men is not subject to this sovereign rule. He lived in a small point of space, in a little country bounded by the Jordan, by Libanus and the Mediterranean, and most of His days were spent within the four walls of a modest cottage of Nazareth. And His empire over the hearts of all is the same everywhere; for Him distance does not exist; there are neither mountains nor seas, neither deserts, rivers, nor forests. His action is felt equally, and He is loved equally, in Mexico and Africa, in Australia and Europe, in every quarter of the globe. When space intervenes between us and our friends and those dearest to us, when we no longer look upon their faces and hear their voices, the most ardent love cools and frequently is wholly extinguished. Christ is neither seen nor heard, between Him and His disciples there is a wall of separation; He is in heaven, they on earth; and yet He lives and reigns in their hearts as really and truly as if He

were seen, and heard, and touched, aye, and more so. What a miracle of power!

Love the most strong and binding, like all things on this earth, yields to time, that inexorable destroyer of everything. Loves so warm that they seemed inextinguishable, with the passing of years and decades, languish and die. Children standing about their agonizing parents burst into tears and are inconsolable; husbands and wives at the fatal moment of separation swear eternal love and fidelity; and yet what happens? Tears are dried up, the wounds inflicted by grief gradually heal, the smile of joy returns to the countenance, in a few months the tokens of mourning are laid aside, theaters, agreeable company, and splendid feasts give pleasure as of old; the dear ones, whose loss was so inconsolable a grief, seem forgotten; the love once borne them, if not wholly extinguished, is immeasurably cooled, and the day is not far distant when it will be only an indistinct and far-away memory of the past.

If this is true in regard to those who are bound to us by the closest of ties of nature, whom we loved most tenderly, with whom we lived and whose joys and sorrows were ours, what are we to say of those from whom we are separated by an interval of a hundred or two hundred years? Which of us feels a sentiment of love for our forefathers who lived centuries ago? None of us; if

we know even their names it will be saying much. Thus it is; time passes over our hearts, and, while it keeps alive the flame of love for those whom we see and with whom we live, it insensibly quenches that which still abides in the heart for those who once were, but whom we see no longer. As love decreases in proportion to the distance we live in space from the persons loved, so does it decrease in proportion to distance in time since they were with us; space and time are two inexorable enemies of love, and in the end they murder it.

On the other hand consider the love that Jesus Christ has kindled in the hearts of His believers; as measureless extent of space has not been able, I will not say to extinguish it, but even to diminish it, so neither has length of time. It had its birth in a group of apostles; it came forth with them from the Cenacle. Since that day the sacred fire of the love of Christ has compassed the earth; since then more than nineteen centuries have come and gone; peace and war, invasions and emigrations, centuries of refinement and centuries of barbarism have alternated; revolution has succeeded revolution, ancient tongues have given way to modern; schools of philosophy and literature, dynasties, forms of government, laws—all have changed. Who can count the transformations that have taken place in the world in the course of these

nineteen centuries? How many enterprises and institutions have risen and perished, how many loves have sprung up, waxed strong, grown old, and died? But love for Jesus Christ, the love of all loves the most sovereign, is ever where it was and as it was; it is still a flame that burns and a fire that warms as does the sun in the firmament; it never grows old; it is ever young, and if it can be said to change at all, it changes by growing ceaselessly and by multiplying its manifestations in new and still more amazing forms.

Another most splendid characteristic of love is the intensity of its energy, which displays itself in the greatness of the works it undertakes and the magnanimous sacrifices it makes. Who can conceive a stronger or more generous love than that which burns in the souls of the followers of Christ? Strong indeed is the love of man for the goods of this earth and for his own aggrandizement; strong is the love of children for parents and of parents for children; strong is the love of husband for wife and wife for husband; strong is the love of life and honor; strong is human love in all its many and various manifestations; but stronger than all loves is love for Jesus Christ. So strong is its attraction that it has drawn and still draws millions of souls to renounce wealth and ease, honors and all the goods of this earth; to forsake father and mother, brothers and sisters,

husbands and wives, in order to follow Jesus Christ more closely; it has led them to flee away and bury themselves in deserts and in cloisters, to mount the scaffold, to bid defiance to fire and sword. That army of Sisters, who fill hospitals, sanitariums, orphanages, and all the abodes of suffering and sorrow; who fill our schools and in Pagan lands search out and gather about them girls abandoned by their parents, and teach them to be in their turn mothers to others; and that other army of religious and missionaries, who, dispersed over five continents and over all the islands of the sea, preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and esteem it the greatest of glories to suffer and die for Him; and those still other millions of men, scattered everywhere, on mountains and in valleys, in cities and villages, who labor and toil, and day in and day out invoke Jesus Christ, bless Him, kiss His images, and adore Him on the altar; all these, in the language of their deeds, more eloquent than words, tell us what means the love of Jesus Christ. Ask them: "Do you love Jesus Christ"? they will reply with one voice: "We love Him." "Do you love Him better than father and mother, brother and sister"? Their answer is: "Yes, we love Him better than we love ourselves." And they will add: "Yes, for Him we would gladly sacrifice honor and life." All the disciples of Christ will say with one voice: "With His grace,

yes, yes"; and we should be happy were such fortitude and glory granted to us.

My friends, tell me if you will, was there ever love equal to this? And it is the purest love that can possibly be conceived.

Jesus Christ is loved, Jesus Christ the Man-God, the Son of a virgin, the brightness of eternal light, the living and substantial image of the Father, the Saint of saints, the fountain of purity; He is loved, of whom a virgin and martyr thus sang divinely: "My Spouse is one whom when I love I am chaste, whom when I touch I am clean, whom when I embrace I am a virgin."[1] Jesus Christ is loved not for the qualities that are seen and are mortal, but for those that are unseen and immortal, which are apprehended by faith or by reason aided by faith. He is loved who has created on earth a vast army of virgin souls, who live here below as the angels do in heaven, who pass through the midst of the world's pollution as does a ray of light, without suffering the shadow or taint of defilement.

Jesus Christ, then, reigns over intellects; He reigns by truth and by His word; He reigns where He is cheerfully welcomed; He reigns by a sovereign authority, which no one for an instant questions.

Jesus Christ reigns over hearts, not by force or

[1]Office of St. Agnes.

fear, not by wealth or power, not by learning, but by love, and He is repaid by a love that knows no limit of space or time, that is superior to every other love, that works prodigies, a love as pure as God is pure.

This two-fold kingdom of Christ over the intellects and the hearts of men we have before our eyes; it is being constantly enlarged, it compasses the earth, and we gathered here to-day belong to it; its first beginnings were in the sepulcher, it issued from the heart of that cold rock with Christ when He entered upon His second and glorious life. Is not this kingdom a miracle, the miracle of miracles?

O Jesus, the conqueror of death, be Thou always by Thy faith the monarch of our intellects, and by Thy love the ruler of our hearts!

DISCOURSE VI

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ the Pattern of Our Spiritual Resurrection

St. Paul has well said that all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God are in Jesus Christ, treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which, as he says elsewhere, destroy the wisdom of the wise and the prudence of the prudent.[1] The divine wisdom that confounds and destroys the wisdom of man is resplendent in all the works of Jesus Christ, as is fitting, both because of His dignity and of their importance; but of all His works His grandeur and majesty are most conspicuous in the mystery we celebrate to-day. And how could it be otherwise, since this is the foundation of our faith, the seal of our hope, and the rock against which the waves of human pride shall forever be broken?

In another Discourse we saw that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact and a miracle that challenges the assaults of the most daring criticism and is of itself amply sufficient to prove His divinity. We saw in another, following the guidance of St. Thomas, what were the reasons for the Resurrection, and how it is the miracle of miracles, since by it Jesus Christ began His kingdom when other rulers lay down theirs, and His greatest power

[1] 1 Cor. i. 19.

shone forth in all its splendor precisely at a time when that of the greatest men is eclipsed and ends forever. And now let us draw a little nearer to this culminating mystery of our faith and consider it, as St. Paul often does, under its moral aspect. He tells us that as Jesus Christ died on the cross, was buried, and rose again, so should we crucify ourselves, die with Him, be buried with Him, and rise with Him; that as in the tomb He put off His passible and mortal human nature, and put on the impassible and immortal, and that as in the tomb He laid aside, together with the napkin and the shroud in which He had been wrapped, death and the infirmities of the flesh, clothed Himself with light and went forth full of life and glory, glowing with eternal youth, so on this day should we strip ourselves of the old man, the man of sin, the man of corruption, and clothe ourselves with the new man, the man created according to God, the man created in justice and holiness, clothe ourselves, in a word, with Jesus Christ Himself. This is the sublime language of the Apostle, repeated almost in the same terms in many of his Letters: "Put off the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error, and put on the new man, who is created according to God in justice and holiness of truth. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."[1]

[1]Eph. iv. 22, 24; Col. iii. 8; Rom. xiii. 14.

My Discourse will be an explanation of these wonderful words from the pen of St. Paul, words which should claim your closest attention.

Let us study man, and in order to study him let us look into our own soul; let us honestly interrogate our conscience and listen to the answer. What do we find deep down in the heart, in the inmost recesses of our being? There are two tendencies, two forces, not only distinct, but very frequently contrary one to the other, growing out of the very roots of our nature, invading and giving color to all our life and producing fruit, each according to its kind. These two tendencies or forces are concealed within us; they live with us and with us they die; and yet so contrary are they in their nature, that some learned men of the past held that there were two souls:

> And the error is disproved, that holds
> The soul not singly lighted in the breast.[1]

Each of us feels within himself a tendency and a force that impels him to love virtue, modesty, justice, benevolence, temperance, generosity toward the poor, mildness, meekness, purity of affection, and the like; we admire all these virtues; we extol those whose adornment they are; and at the same time we feel within us another tendency, another force that draws us onward to the vices contrary to them; and thus it happens that, while

[1]Purgatory, c. iv, v, 5, 6.

we appreciate modesty and humility, we are puffed up with vanity and love to hear our name passed from mouth to mouth; that, while we preach justice and benevolence, we are practising injustice and opening our hearts to hatred and a desire for revenge; that, while we praise temperance and charity toward the poor, we feel the pangs of gluttony and avarice; that, while we extol meekness and mildness to the skies, we permit ourselves to be ruled by anger and disdain; that, while we have a feeling of reverence and holy envy for pure souls and virgins, we are ourselves the slaves of profligate loves. There are within us two men, the one good and loving what is good, the other bad and loving what is evil; the one yearning for heaven, the other clinging to the earth; the one intent on the things of the spirit, the other intent on the things of earth. These two contrary forces contest with each other the supremacy of the heart; when we follow the one we have the consciousness of being good, when we follow the other we experience the remorse of the sinful and the vicious. This truth was felicitously expressed by the pagan poet: "I see the good and I approve, but I cling to the worse." And St. Paul has expressed it more felicitously still in these words: "The good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do. I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind,

and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members.'"[1] Is there any warfare imaginable, any opposition, more manifest, more cruel, more persistent than this? Whence comes it? What is the origin of this cruel warfare that seems to divide my being into two halves, that torments and harrows my heart? I know, I comprehend whence it all comes. My body is of the earth, earthy; it has the groveling instincts of the earth, and to the earth it is incessantly drawn; while my soul and mind, having received from heaven the light of truth, aspire to heaven, are attracted toward heaven, and hunger only for the things of heaven. Yes, now I comprehend; there are two natures, each different and each having different needs and longings, and it is natural and necessary that there should be war between them. But the nobler nature should rule the less noble and make of it a handmaid; if not a docile and contented handmaid, at least one resigned and not a rebel. How comes it, then, that the part of us that ought to obey commands, and the part that ought to command allows itself to be dragged along behind the part that is made to obey? Whence this incongruity?

Here faith comes to the aid of reason and informs us that from the beginning God in His goodness did not create man such as we know him now to be; in the beginning he was exempt from this

[1]Rom. vii. 19, 23.

distressing and degrading warfare; he had passions, but they were obedient and docile to the authority of reason; his body and its appetites were subject to the will, and everything in him was most orderly. The enemy shattered this harmony when, God permitting, man opened for him an entrance into his heart. Then, and not until then, did man's worse nature rise in revolt; there then appeared in the first man two divergent and contrary forces; two men revealed themselves in him, the new man and the old. Sin having entered into the first man did not and could not destroy him, because he was the work of God, but it robbed him of God's grace and friendship; it left him reason, will, and liberty, but enfeebled and wounded; and the passions that had their abode in his lower nature, like servants when they feel that their master is weak and the rein relaxed, became turbulent and rose in rebellion. Sons of an uncrowned sovereign, we too are uncrowned; sons of a father who has dissipated a splendid patrimony and is become poor, we, too, are poor; sons of an enfeebled father, we, too, are feeble, and feeble will be our children. Each of us bears upon us the tokens of former greatness and the vestiges of the havoc that supervened; we are like a splendid dismantled ruin whose remains are memorials of its pristine magnificence; we bear within us the shame and the wound inflicted by a fallen father,

and that which perpetuates us kills us. Can we by our strength regain our lost greatness? No. Can the mass of earth, that has tumbled down into the valley, rise again to its former height and welcome the rising sun? Can one dead restore life to himself? God alone could lift up humanity that fell with the fall of its father. He alone could renew humanity, regenerate it, as Holy Writ expresses it, and He so willed and so did. How? In this way.

The first father and head of the human race, who ought to have transmitted to his posterity, together with the natural life, grace and all the gifts with which he was endowed, voluntarily stripped himself of these, and transmitted only bare nature, and therefore nature deprived of the mastery over its passions, deprived of the life of divine grace, and no longer holding the scepter over its lower nature. It was therefore necessary that in lieu of the first head of the human race, who failed of his duty and in himself interrupted the stream of divine life, which he should have transmitted, a second head should come to repair this great wreck and cause to flow out from himself the fountain of life that had been dried up in the first.

The Son of God, equal to the Father, took to Himself our nature, made Himself man, perfect man, and began the restoration of the great work that had been so sadly marred by the first head of

the human race. Hence St. Paul in his energetic and precise way calls Christ the second Adam. "The first man, Adam," he says, "was made into a living soul, the last into a quickening spirit; the first man was of the earth, earthy; the second man, from heaven, heavenly."[1] Jesus Christ, the Man-God, having made Himself head of the human race and repairer of the harm done by the first Adam, must necessarily accomplish two things; He must first destroy the evil done by the first Adam, arrest the poisoned stream that was flooding the human family, and expiate the punishment due it; and next, He must open anew the fountains of divine life, that had been dried up, and diffuse this life through all the children of Adam. And Jesus Christ did both.

He took upon Himself the baleful heritage of Adam, the heritage of sin; He made Himself a bailsman, and the punishment that should have been visited upon all the children of guilt He in His excessive love drew upon Himself, as Isaias had foretold: "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed." He suffered and died for them and by His sufferings and death extinguished in Himself their debt and destroyed the fatal work of the first man. But this was not enough; having com-

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 45,47.

pleted the first half of the work by expiating the penalty incurred, the second remained. To grief should succeed joy, and life should reign where death had reigned before.

The Person of the divine Word, having led the blessed soul of Jesus, from which it was never separate, down to where the souls of the just were awaiting their liberation and filled them with joy, conducted it back to the body from which it had been parted, united it to this body and through it infused into this body that pure and potent breath of life that will never be extinguished. Thus to the death that was the portion of the first Adam succeeded the life of the second Adam, the true life that will never fail. Thus the generation according to the flesh, the generation that kills, was brought to an end, and the generation or regeneration, according to the spirit, the generation that gives life, was begun.

At the instant at which the soul of Jesus was reunited to His body, all its divine life was concentrated in the second Adam as it had been once concentrated in the first.

O Jesus, O Son of God, O second Father of the human family, incomparably greater than the first, open Thy side, pour out upon all the children, whom the first Adam had killed, the exhaustless stream of Thy life. Why wilt Thou delay? As our body without a soul is a corpse and the food

of corruption, so are our souls without the breath of Thy grace dead in Thy sight and the prey of Thy enemy and ours, the prince of darkness and death.

My brethren, Jesus rose to communicate to all the children of Adam His own very life and to become our Father according to the spirit; but He wills that there shall be a complete difference between the natural generation by which we are the sons of Adam, and the spiritual generation by which we are made His sons. What is this difference? I will explain.

The generation according to the flesh, which comes to us through Adam and which kills, is transmitted to us without our assent and anticipates our will, and in giving us the life of nature it also makes us sinners; on the contrary, the generation according to the spirit demands our assent, follows the act of our will, and harms us only when we will it to harm us.

And this is a high honor God does our poor nature in permitting us also to have a share in our regeneration, thus showing the respect He has for our liberty and leaving to us the entire merit of our assent.

How, then, does the divine life that streams out from the risen Jesus circulate through our souls, penetrate, vivify, and transform them? In many ways, the one more perfect than the other.

The divine life of Jesus Christ is a light that enlightens the eyes of the mind, a fire that warms and inflames the heart. This He has Himself said: "I am the light of the world. I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly."

The word of Christ is the light that illuminates the mind, it is the sacred fire that inflames and quickens the heart, because His word is the bearer of truth. The risen Jesus, addressing His apostles and putting the whole scope of His mission into a few words, said solemnly: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world. I am the light and the truth. By My word I have communicated this light and truth to you; and do you by word of mouth communicate it to all men. I am the light, ye are lamps lighted from My light, and going through all the earth; do ye light other lamps, dissipate the darkness of error, and usher in the reign of truth." And they obeyed, they traversed all the earth; they bore the light of truth everywhere by the same means by which they had received it, that is, by word of mouth, and by word of mouth is it preserved and propagated and will be propagated until the end of time.

But it is not enough for man to receive the light of truth. Truth shows the path to be trod, the goal to be reached, the work to be done, the evil to be shunned, the virtue to be practised, the error to be spurned, the enemies to be encountered, the sin, the enemy, to be slain within us. But where is the strength to come from necessary to do all this? Who will supply it? By what means is the strength and the life, which Jesus Christ has within Him, to be conveyed to each of us? By what channels will the health-giving waters of eternal life be carried from Christ, their exhaustless fountain, to us? By the channels of the sacraments that issue from the heart of Christ.

The first channel through which the waters of divine life flow is Baptism. By it the stain, by which all our souls are defiled in their origin, is washed away, and by it is sown in them the seed of supernatural life, killed by the first father of the human race and made to live again by the second Adam, Jesus Christ. By Baptism is grafted into the old withered trunk of the first Adam the new and vigorous shoot of the Man-God, the second Adam, and a second life, prolific of celestial fruit, is commenced.

Such, my friends, is the divine work of Baptism, a work that we see admirably typified in what is done under our own eyes by the husbandman; it is the graft to which St. Paul refers when he says

that *we are men grafted into the good olive tree.*

We are two trees and consequently we have two lives; one of these trees is a wild tree and produces either no fruit at all or only sour and bitter fruit; the other is a domestic tree and produces good fruit and sweet to the taste. Now what does the industrious farmer do? He makes an incision in the wild tree, takes a small shoot from the domestic tree and grafts it into the wild. And what happens? By a hidden and wonderful operation of nature the graft adheres to the wild trunk, draws from it its life, but so transforms it that there are two lives in one and one in two. The life of the old trunk does not cease, but it is changed in passing into the graft, and its fruits, while copious, take on the nature of the graft.

This is a very striking and vivid image of the transformation Jesus Christ works in us by Baptism. We are the trunk, unfortunately run wild in Adam, and we are unproductive. Jesus Christ, after the manner of a graft, puts His own life into us, and by it we are transformed and bring forth the works and fruit of divine life.

But the graft, in order that it may grow and wax strong, requires the constant care of the cultivator; so also the prolific shoot, which Christ by Baptism inserts in us, in order that it may develop and produce fruit, requires His continuous care, and hence Baptism is followed by Confirmation,

which gives a new increase to the life so felicitously begun.

Nor does the divine work stop here. Every living thing to reach its full development must have nourishment proper to itself. Plants and animals must have their natural food, and if they are deprived of it they waste away and die. So also the life that Jesus Christ has by Baptism engrafted into us requires its proper food, and the food of the divine life can not be other than divine, and therefore has Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist become the food of souls.

The life of Jesus Christ is perfected in us by the blessed Eucharist. It was begun in Baptism, increased in Confirmation, and completed in the blessed Eucharist, which is the gift of the Author of life Himself. Through the blessed Eucharist Jesus Christ is in each of us and each of us is in Him, and that life, that was poured into Him in all its fulness at the moment of the Resurrection, is poured into us when we receive Him.

But alas, an unfriendly hand, an impetuous storm, was able to pull out the graft from the trunk. There it is lying on the ground; the leaves are sear and yellow, the flowers withered, the fruit dried up, and the tree is there crownless and bare, and in its own language begs for mercy and implores the tiller of the soil to give it his toil and care. The husbandman sets to work to do over

again what he has already done; he puts back the graft and once more re-establishes the current between the new life and the old.

So also does Christ in the Church, or in the redeemed human race. Man separates from Him, pulls out the divine element or graft, and he is once more a wild trunk; he is dead to all true life, and impotent to produce fruit pleasing to God. In His mercy Jesus Christ opens another channel through which rush the life-giving waters, the channel of Penance, and the work of Baptism is renewed. By Penance the graft that had been torn out is put back again, and the old trunk regains its lost transforming power and is once more adorned with new fruit.

Through the four channels of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, and Penance does Jesus Christ pour His divine life into all men one by one.

Sooner or later every man finds himself face to face with death; he utters an agonizing cry and calls aloud for aid and comfort. Jesus does not forsake him; He opens a fifth channel and through it again flows the healing wave of His life to comfort, console, and purify His children, engaged in a conflict with death, and this channel is Extreme Unction.

And thus does Jesus Christ meet man at his very birth; He comes to him in the cradle, wherein he has been laid by motherly hands, and gives him

His grace, makes him a sharer in His very life, follows him through all the stages of infancy, youth, adolescence, and manhood; accompanies him to the very edge of the grave, all the while creating him anew, strengthening him, nourishing him, lifting him up when he falls, restoring him to life when he is dead to grace, and finally, in his last great trial, fortifying and animating him. Still man, while an individual and rightly regarded as such, may become a member of one of two societies, of a domestic society or the family, or of the great society of the Church, and hence, if he takes upon himself the responsibility and government of a family or assumes the duties of a ruler in the Church, it is necessary for him again to receive a fresh participation of the life of Christ, and therefore are there two sacraments, Marriage and Holy Orders, two channels of divine life, that sanctify man and give him the graces requisite to enable him to discharge his duties in either of these two societies.

A stupendous creation, this of the goodness and wisdom of Jesus Christ, who, coming forth from the tomb, overflowing with youth and divine life, enlightened all humanity sitting in darkness with the seven-fold ray of His light, and inundated it with the seven-fold stream of life of which He is the exhaustless source. It is thus, my friends, that we must die with Christ and rise with Him; that

like Him we must leave in the grave the infirmities of the flesh and begin a new life; that we must put off the old man and put on the new.

And here it is well to call to mind another truth of the highest importance, also contained in the passage of St. Paul which I am engaged in explaining. Let us go back to the similitude of the graft used by St. Paul.

The graft does not kill the wild tree, nor does the wild tree kill the graft; the one is necessary to the other and between the two there is so intimate a union that, though there are two lives, there is only one tree. Now what does the prudent husbandman do to make the tree thrive and bear fruit? He carefully provides so that all the life-giving sap of the wild trunk may flow into the graft and there be transformed, losing its own proper life and qualities and receiving a new life and the qualities proper to it. Hence he is careful to cut away all the shoots and twigs that the trunk sends forth from the graft downward and which would dissipate and waste the sap which should feed the graft and help the fruit. The Apostle tells us, my brethren, that we should do the same. Let us cut away the shoots of the old man whom we bear within us; that is, let us repress and make war upon the passions that breed and spawn in our nature, upon the old Adam, and the forces that are squandered in satisfying them will go to

invigorate the holy graft, the new Adam, that we have received from Christ. In the measure in which the wild trunk is unable to use its life-giving sap to feed its own shoots, will it strengthen and nourish the graft. When the old man, the corrupt nature, the heritage of Adam, dies within us, the new man who comes from Christ will live in us and bear fruit. Then will be accomplished in us what was accomplished in Christ, our Head, who died and rose again; who in dying slew sin, and in rising began a new, blessed, and immortal life. Then will be accomplished in us what St. Paul so ardently longed for when he wrote: "Therefore as we have borne the image of the earthly Adam, let us bear the image of the heavenly Christ."[1] And again: "If ye be risen with Christ seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, not the things that are upon the earth."[2] And once more: "Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new paste, for Christ our pasch is sacrificed for you."[3]

To make war upon the passions that have their abode in our nature and conquer them, to put off the old man, to die with Christ, to acquire and practise virtue, to put on the new man, to rise with Christ—this is the teaching of the Gospel, the meaning of the mystery of this day; this is the essence of the Christian life.

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 49. [2] Col. iii. 1, 2. [3] 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

DISCOURSE VII

Easter

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the Resurrection of Our Bodies

"REJOICE, thou queen of heaven, for He that thee for Son was given, as He promised is risen, Alleluia! Long live Jehovah!" This is the salutation, the cry of joy that comes unbidden, irresistibly, from the heart of the Church to-day, the cry that announces the triumph of Christ. And to whom could it be more fittingly addressed than to His mother, the inseparable companion of His sorrows, His humiliations, and His unspeakable agonies? Yes, O great Lady, dry thy tears, put away weeping and mourning, open thy heart to joy, be glad, exult, triumph! Queen of Heaven rejoice, Alleluia!

To this cry of gladness, intoned by the Church, a reply goes up from all believers scattered over the broad face of the globe; on mountains, in plains and valleys, in cities and hamlets, on continents and on islands, from every corner of the earth goes up this great cry of faith and tumultuous joy, which is admirably summarized in one sole word

of the Sacred Liturgy, *Alleluia.*[1] Long live Jehovah!

Heaven and earth, angels and men, share in this triumph of their head and king, Jesus Christ, and men more than angels, because the resurrection of His body is a glory that belongs more properly to our poor and mortal nature. To-day Jesus Christ opens to us the avenues of life. For more than forty centuries death had ranged through all the earth and was its undisputed master. A hundred generations had gone down before his scythe, not a single son of Adam had escaped his embrace, not a single one that had fallen had ever risen again, not a single one had come forth from the darkness of the grave, or, having come forth from it for a few days, had again re-entered it. To-day for the first time the body of a son of Adam, the body of the second Adam, of the Man-God, Jesus Christ, came forth from it never to enter it again. He rose in an instant, cast aside the winding-sheet, overturned the stone at the mouth of the sepulcher, as a man lying asleep under a tree might brush away a dry leaf that had fallen on his face,[2] and overflowing with life and immortal youth flung in the face of death, until now the conqueror, this challenge taken by

[1]In Hebrew *Allelu* means, "Long live," and *ia* is an abbreviation of Jehovah.

[2]We know from the text that Jesus Christ came forth from the sepulcher while it was still sealed, and the stone was really rolled away by an angel.

St. Paul from the prophet Osee: "O Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?"

Jesus Christ is truly the first-born of the dead, and to use the phrase of St. Paul, the first-fruits of the risen, because He first broke the chains of death and He is the first of the risen of whom it is written: "*He dieth no more, death shall no more have dominion over Him.*" Jesus Christ is our Head, we are His members; since He is risen, we too shall rise; this He solemnly promised when He said: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life and I will raise Him up on the last day."

The resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ is the secure and infallible pledge of the resurrection of our bodies and reminds us of one of the fundamental truths of our faith, the last of the Creed, which we daily recite: "*I believe in the resurrection of the body.*"

My subject, then, is the resurrection of the body considered both in the light of faith and in the light of reason, and in treating it I bespeak your patience.

Had, or have peoples, ancient or modern, not living in the light of the Gospel, any idea of a life beyond the grave? As regards the life of the soul, yes; all admitted or admit, at least in a vague, confused way, another life happy or unhappy according to one's deserts. And as to the life of the

body, did they know of, or at least divine, its resurrection? The answer admits of no doubt; they did not know of its resurrection, or at most they had only a hazy surmise of it, and to be convinced of this it is sufficient to consult their sacred books, to read their poets, and to study their religious traditions.

On one occasion Paul was brought before the Areopagus of Athens to explain to that august assembly the new doctrine that he had been teaching. He spoke, being listened to with religious silence, for some time, but when he mentioned the resurrection of the dead *they mocked him.* To the wise men of Greece the resurrection of the body seemed a fable or a dream of feeble minds.

Still later, in the presence of Festus, governor of Judea, of King Agrippa and of Queen Bernice, while explaining his faith he again spoke of the resurrection, and Festus said with a loud voice: "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."[1] The Areopagus of Athens and the governor of Judea were representatives of Pagan thought and of natural reason, and you have heard what they said; their words could not be more explicit.

The conviction, the clear and firm faith we have in the resurrection of the body, comes to us solely from on high, from divine revelation.

[1]Acts xvii, xxvi.

I open the Sacred Book and I hear Job crying out from the heart of Idumea: "I know that my Redeemer liveth and that in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and I shall be clothed with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God."[1] Ezechiel, seated on the banks of the Tigris, in a well-known vision would seem to adumbrate the future resurrection;[2] and Daniel at the same period, an exile on the shores of the Euphrates, still more clearly pointed to it in the multitude that he saw awaking from the dust of the earth, "some unto life everlasting, and some unto reproach."[3]

It was a firm faith in the resurrection that sustained the Machabees in their terrible struggles against tyranny.

At the time of Christ the resurrection of the body was universally and firmly believed by all Israel, except by the sect of the Sadducees, the Epicureans of that age, who were regarded both

[1]This is the version of our Vulgate. The original Hebrew text is somewhat different and is not quite so clear as a proof of the Resurrection. There are also some Catholic interpreters, few indeed, who doubt that the resurrection can be demonstrated from this passage. Their arguments are drawn not alone from the letter of the text, but rather from the context, and from the character and spirit of the entire Book of Job, which does not once hint at a future retribution; and they do not seem to be wholly without foundation.

[2]Ezechiel in his celebrated vision foreshadows the liberation of the Hebrew people and their return from their bondage in Assyria to their native country. This is evidently the literal and proper sense of the vision. It was afterward applied by Fathers and interpreters to the final resurrection.

[3]Dan. xii. 2.

by the Synagogue and the nation as disseminators of error.

When Jesus Christ said to Martha: "Thy brother shall rise again," Martha replied: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus Christ spoke often and in clearest terms of the resurrection and neither the apostles, nor His implacable enemies, the Pharisees, nor the crowds who listened to Him, uttered a word against His teaching on this point. It was therefore a doctrine universally and without exception recognized and professed by all true Hebrews.

It was with the truth of the resurrection as it was with that of the promise of the Messias and with all other truths revealed from the beginning; they existed from the beginning in the deposit of revelation, but as it were only in germ; at first they were visible only as a faint dawning light, then they grew more luminous as time went on, and finally at the coming of Christ and of the apostles they appeared in radiant brightness, and hence the Church, in closing her Creed with the magnificent profession of faith, "*I believe in the resurrection of the body,*" does no more than gather up into one stream of light all the rays of the Mosaic and Gospel revelations; she combines into one all the utterances of prophets and apostles during more than forty centuries.

And why should not our bodies rise again? If Christ is risen, says the Apostle, then shall we also rise. He is the vine, we are the tendrils; He is the tree, we are the branches; He is the head, we are the members; He is the general, we are the soldiers; He is the sun, we are the stars that cluster about Him and form His crown. Has there ever been seen a vine without tendrils, or a tree without branches, or a head separated from its members, or a general without soldiers, or a sun not surrounded by a retinue of lesser lights? And should the harmony, which is a sovereign law in all those works of God in which His grandeur and perfections are less conspicuous, be wanting in those which form His most excellent work, namely, in the Incarnation, of which the crown is the Resurrection? It has pleased the Son of God to have now and for all eternity a body, and such a body; and shall we, His brothers according to the flesh and the sons of God by adoption, not have ours also? Our bodies together with our souls were sanctified in Baptism, were anointed with sacred chrism in Confirmation, were nourished with the adorable body of Jesus Christ, were made the temples of the Holy Ghost by grace and sharers in the divine life, and shall they be forever dissolved into the elements of the earth? Shall the adorable body of Jesus Christ shine forever in heaven, isolated and alone, radiant as the

sun, and the bodies of His younger brethren according to the flesh, who should form His halo, who have suffered with Him and suffered as He has, lie forever in the dust of the grave? No, never; the harmony of the divine laws forbids this; Christ is risen and we, too, shall rise with Him.

So far the teachings of faith, and what says unaided reason, and reason enlightened by faith?

Reason, even in the days of the apostles, did not hesitate to deny and scoff at the comforting doctrine of a future resurrection. This St. Paul himself tells us; and after his day there were many heretics, and among them Marcion, who, speaking in the name of human reason, said boldly that to believe in the resurrection of the body was stupid. And why? Because, they replied, it is impossible. And why is it impossible? Because, they added, the elements of which the human body is composed disintegrate, dissolve into thousands of parts, become parts of other bodies and are identified with them. And may they not also, in the evolution of things, go to make parts of other human bodies? And if so, how can each single body take again what belongs to it?

What answer does the Church make to these difficulties, both old and new? She answers now, as she answered then by the voice of two distinguished writers, Athenagoras and Tertullian, who

spoke in the name of faith and reason and whose answer is as weighty and convincing in this day as it was in theirs.[1]

God is omniscient and omnipotent; why, then, can He not also raise up bodies from the dead? Can not He who created the universe out of nothing, who subjected all things to law and order, who harmoniously preserves all things, call back to new life all human bodies? Who formed the first human body? Faith tells us that God formed it, and reason tells the same thing, because there is no other possible explanation of its origin. Can not He, who made it once, make it again? Can not one who has built a house that has fallen down rebuild it? Who can doubt it? Only an atheist can deny the possibility of the resurrection of the body.

What matters it if its elements are scattered and have become parts of other bodies? God knows where they are and He can gather them together and make again the body that has been broken up. Because we are ignorant and impotent, this is no reason for denying the wisdom and the omnipotence of God, who knows how to do, and who does, what we neither can know nor do now or at any future time. This is a short but peremptory reply.

[1]Each of these authors wrote a work entitled, Of the Resurrection of the Body. This article of faith was even at that age general and accepted as certain.

Let us examine the matter a little more closely. Both faith and reason tell us that the soul is immortal. We know that the soul is not the entire and perfect man; it is, indeed, the noblest part of him, the life and the form of the body, but separated from the body it is defective and imperfect, because man is of his very nature made up of spirit and matter. Separate the soul from the body and it will certainly subsist and exercise functions proper to itself, such as to think and to will, but it can not keep up relations with the visible world. To see it must have eyes, to hear it must have ears, to taste it must have a palate, to smell and to touch it must have those two senses, to reason, to deduce, to infer, it must have the images formed by the senses, as the poet beautifully and profoundly says:

. . . Solo da sensato apprehende
Cio che fa poscia d'intelletto degno.[1]

The soul, then, is by its nature so constituted that it requires the body; without it, it would be wholly isolated from the world of sense; with it, it forms one sole being, one sole nature, so that it can say with perfect truth: "*I* think, *I* feel, *I* will, *I* am constrained, *I* am immortal, *I* am mortal." They are two in one, and one in two, always the same indivisible *I*, the same man in all operations.

[1]Only through objects of sense does it apprehend what it afterward makes worthy of the intellect.

even the most diverse. Now if the soul never dies, it must necessarily take again its body, either that or we must say that it will live forever in a state contrary to its nature and of perpetual violence against itself, and this would be contrary to divine Wisdom, which disposes all things in number, weight, and measure, and therefore in perfect harmony. Reason therefore teaches us that the union of the soul and body is both natural and necessary, and also that it is fitting and necessary that our body should rise again, and that it should be united to the soul in the life to come and be again its instrument and inseparable companion. Their marriage is not dissolved but only suspended, and like husband and wife after a long and painful separation, they will joyfully embrace one another and be thenceforth forever united.[1]

There have been men, and men, too, of ability and learning, who held that the union of the soul with the body is a punishment and who called the

[1]This is the teaching of St. Thomas and the Schools, and rises out of the philosophical principle concerning the composite nature of man. It is as follows: Anima corpori *naturaliter* unitur; est enim secundum suam essentiam corporis forma. Est enim *contra naturam animæ absque corpore esse. Nihil autem quod est contra naturam potest esse perpetuum.* Non igitur perpetuo erit anima sine corpore. Quum igitur perpetuo maneat oportet eam corpori iterato conjungi, quod est resurgere. Immortalitas igitur animarum *exigere videtur* resurrectionem corporum futuram. (Contra Gent. Lib, iv, C. 79.) The phrase *exigere videtur* proves that according to St. Thomas the argument is not an irrefragable one.

In fact there is this great difficulty, that the resurrection, contrary to the common opinion of theologians, would then seem to be necessarily *natural*, whereas reason tells us it is *supernatural.* But this is not the place to go fully into this subject.

body the prison and the tomb of the soul, as if their union was contrary to nature and to the design of God and neither useful nor necessary to either, and this language, possibly less explicitly, it still repeated by some in our own day. So true is it that the soul is created for the body and the body for the soul, that the very thought of their separation fills us with terror, and both one and the other struggle desperately to prevent, or at least to defer it. This is evident from the conduct of men during the whole course of their lives and particularly at the approach of death. Besides being impelled by instinct, they of themselves take every possible precaution to drive from them whatever may tend to hasten the separation of the soul from the body, that is, they struggle to keep death at a distance and to secure and foster their union, or what is the same, to preserve life. When man becomes conscious that the hour of fatal separation is approaching, he shudders at the thought; he feels a cold sweat breaking out upon him, a pallor overspreads his countenance, and collecting all his strength he makes a last effort to loose the hand of death that has him in its grasp. It would seem that the soul clasps the body still closer to it and that the body clings more desperately to the soul, each dreading to be parted from the other; they are like two loyal and attached friends, two loving spouses, who refuse

to be separated and who protest against the cruelty of those who violently tear them from one another's embrace. The body trembles and struggles against the grasp of the enemy; the afflicted soul, overwhelmed with grief, groans in an agony of pain, calls aloud for aid, utters heartrending shrieks, and refuses to forsake its body, its faithful friend, and when the time of parting comes, they bid each other *farewell,* as if to say, "We shall meet again."

Nature, then, in language mute and eloquent inspires us with a horror of death and with a desire to live, and this implies a union of soul and body; and hence it teaches us that the resurrection of the body responds to the yearnings of the heart and to the exigencies of our very nature, and that in consequence it must sooner or later take place.[1]

And, moreover, do we not know that the human body, the masterpiece of the divine Artificer, was originally created so as never to die and perish?

We know that the enemy, the prince of death, came and sowed in the human body the deadly

[1]Amissio vitæ corporalis naturaliter est horribilis naturæ humanæ (St. Thom. iii., p. 9-46, art. 6). The fact of suicide, by which man voluntarily effects the separation of the soul from his body, may be alleged as an objection. But this phenomenon is an exception; it is a struggle against nature itself, it is an anomaly and proves nothing against the universal tendency to preserve life. It is like lying, hatred, and injustice, contrary to nature, and only shows that the human will is so powerful that it can act against itself. No animal commits suicide, because animals obey nature; man can do so, because being endowed with reason he can rebel against reason and instinct.

germ which caused it to grow old and which finally killed it, and that death, the inexorable executor of the divine justice, punished rebel man and consigned his miserable body to the tomb. But it is not right or just that the creature should be finally victorious over the Creator and that the arch-rebel, the prince of darkness and death, should sit upon the ruins which he has made of the most beautiful work of God, and casting its ashes to the winds, proudly say to its Maker: "I have destroyed forever the most perfect work of Thy hands, the body of that man whom Thou didst enthrone as a king upon the earth; I shall forever tread his ashes underfoot; I have conquered Thee." No, the wicked one, who fell from on high, can not and must not gain a victory over the Creator, and hence if the body of man must go down before the assaults of death, the avenger of sin, it must rise again once the Creator has taken upon Him and discharged all the offices of a redeemer and restorer. No work of God, even the atom created by Him, perishes; why, then, should the body of man perish? If it perished through its own fault, why should not He, who first made it, again remake it?

And here we should not pass over another argument, which science furnishes us and which is drawn from the very depths of our own nature. Listen to it and weigh it well.

Our body and soul are two substances wholly distinct the one from the other; who can doubt this? Still they are so intimately united one with the other that from the union results one single personality, one sole nature, one sole perfect being, one sole *I,* as was said above. From this it follows that the acts of these two substances, though in themselves distinct, are inseparable, since they all center in and rise out of one single nature, one single person, one single *agent,* the *I.* The soul thinks, but it uses the brain as its instrument; the soul wills and loves, but the heart is its organ in doing so; the soul hears and sees, tastes, smells, and touches, but it does so through ears and eyes, through the senses of taste, smell, and touch.[1] There is not a single act of the soul that is not reflected in the body, not a single sensation of the body that is not faithfully transmitted to the soul; they are companions, two, but indivisible; the body is a harp, the soul is the musician that plays upon it; the harp without a musician is mute; the musician without the harp can not gladden the ear or enable us to enjoy the harmonies that delight the soul. All the actions of man, whether good or bad, come from the soul as from a first cause, and from the body as from a secondary cause. Now if body and soul are in-

[1]Of course all understand that the body concurs in one way in spiritual actions, and the soul in quite another way in material or sensible actions.

separable in producing actions, worthy either of reward or punishment, it is but reasonable and just that they should also be inseparable in receiving both the one and the other in the measure due them. If the soul has believed and hoped, loved and suffered in its warfare against the passions and in the exercise of virtue, so also has the body professed the Faith by word of mouth, invoked aid from on high, endured abstinence and fasting, and felt the galling curb of mortification. If the soul has been harrowed by sorrow for sin, the body, too, has done penance and the eyes have wept bitter tears. If the soul has clung steadfastly to the truth, the body has also received these truths through the ears, and by the hands has translated them into works. If the soul has commanded, the body has obeyed. As they have been united in waging war on vice and in loving and practising virtue, so shall they be united in enjoying the reward and happiness they have merited. The soul requires, then, that as in trial so in triumph the body shall be united to it, that thus justice may be done both; and what is this but to affirm the necessity of the resurrection of the body, as faith teaches?[1]

[1]Listen to the teaching of St. Thomas, which could not be clearer: Operatio est conjunctio et non tantum animæ; et quia operanti debitur operis merces, oportet quod ipse homo *compositus ex anima et corpore*, operis sui mercedem accipiat (Sum. Suppl. 9-77, art. 1 id 3).

Elsewhere the Holy Doctor writes: In hac vita homines, *ex an-*

And now permit me to recall to your minds another truth, which I have touched upon elsewhere, and which illustrates the Catholic dogma of the resurrection of the body.

The characteristic, the seal, of all divine works is the harmony of the whole and of all the parts. Looking at the creation of the universe we see all creatures ranged according to their kind and species, one above the other, in a marvelous order, like an immense ladder, the lowest round of which is inorganic matter and the highest, approaching nearer unto God, is the angels. The lowest round or step, it will be noted, is the base of the one above it, and harmony requires that one shall not be separated from the other, that the proportions shall be preserved from the base to the vertex, from bottom to top, and that there shall be no gap or leap to break the orderly progression.

Fancy that in heaven, where Christ exhibits all the splendor of His glory and His greatness, only souls should receive and reflect the light that goes out from Him and that they alone should sing His praises and form His retinue. The universal harmony would be broken, there would be a note of

ima et corpore compositi, peccant vel recte agunt. Debetur igitur hominibus, et secundum animam et secundum corpus, praemium vel poena. Manifestum est autem quod in hac vita praemia ultimae felicitatis consequi non possunt. . . . Necessarium est igitur ponere iteratam animae ad corpus conjunctionem ut homo in anima et corpore praemiari et puniri possit. (Cont. Gent. lib. iv. c. 79.)

discord in the heavenly psalmody. There would be a gap between visible and invisible creatures, between material and spiritual life, between bodies and spirits; there would be a yawning void and no bridge to span it; the link connecting the visible and the invisible, the body and spirit of man as he came forth from the hand of God, would be wanting. Were this the case the harmony that is luminous here on earth would be more perfect than that which is resplendent in heaven, the order of time would surpass the order of eternity, while this is and must be the term and complement of that.

Hence all reason proclaims that souls must have on high in heaven the bodies they had here below on earth, and thus shall there be always and everywhere the most perfect harmony. When, then, the hour appointed by God comes souls will take up again their bodies, from which they will never more be separated, and with them and through them they will be everlasting monuments of the goodness and justice of God and they will restore and establish forever the harmony that death had temporarily broken and interrupted.

The workman is revealed in his works; they are his crown and his glory; they are the daughters of his genius; they ceaselessly proclaim his power; he sees himself reflected in them; they are his admiration; in them he finds his purest joy; he contemplates himself in them as does a father in his

children. All creatures, visible and invisible, material and spiritual, are the productions of the eternal Workman. All, each in its own way and according to its kind, reveal and preach abroad the greatness and the ineffable perfections of God, the Creator and sovereign Ruler. We see them all set in order here, as we have said, as in an immense series of gradations, the first step of which is inorganic matter, the lowest form of being, and thence they mount up and up to the last and highest, near unto God, where stand the pure spirits, whose life partakes more intimately of the breath of His. All creatures are incessantly impelled to move onward and upward, for all, each after its kind, feel the need of growing more beautiful and more perfect, of drawing always nearer and nearer to the spring of beauty and perfection; all unconsciously obey the cry that resounds throughout all creation: "*Excelsior! Excelsior!*" Inorganic matter aspires to become organic; organic struggles to reach at least the lowest form of life, the vegetative; and having reached it, it longs to go still higher and share in the animal life; and from these by a supreme effort it reaches forward to the threshold of the spiritual life, and in some mysterious way receives of its radiance and gives it such aid as it can, becoming the instrument, the fulcrum, the point of departure, for the most daring flights of thought.

Is it not true, my friends, that the dust we trample under our feet, the molecule of hydrogen or oxygen, of calcium or nitrogen that goes whirling through the air, that fastens upon a tiny plant that is assimilated by a flying bird, produces some sort of living thing that becomes part of our body, and, after thousands and thousands of transformations, known only to God, forms the tissue of our brain, its most delicate fibers, and the muscles of our heart, and that these are the organ or the wonderful harp through which the soul reveals the light of its thought, the harmony of its ideas, the depth of its affections, and makes the imperious voice of its will heard? Such is matter espoused to spirit, the flower, the anticipated fruit, of all matter disseminated throughout the universe, mysteriously joined to being that thinks and wills, forming with it one sole *I*, and borne by it to an intimate union with Christ, or to the eternal kiss of God Himself. What a mystery, and also what a nobility and dignity for this poor flesh of ours to rise step by step until it reaches the soul, then on to Christ, man and God, and thence on to God Himself. This flesh, in itself so poor and miserable and despicable, gathers into itself all the works of the Creator; it is in its being a compendium of them all, and it offers them all to Him who made it. It is the queen of all earthly works; it is the vase which the soul fills with itself; it is the house

which the soul builds and beautifies for itself, in which it has its abode and moves at will. The flesh, our body, is the altar on which the soul offers its sacrifices, its prayers, its adorations, and its thanksgiving, and upon which God sends down the heavenly fire, the life-giving and blessed dew of His grace, for these come to us through the sacraments and the sacraments bear them on through the body to the soul.[1] And will this body, in which so much greatness, excellence, and beauty, so many and so exalted titles, are concentrated, be forsaken by the Creator and Redeemer, and be cast away like the fragments of a broken vase, as an object to be despised? No, my friends, this can not be. Even the fragments of a valuable vase, that has been maliciously broken and smashed by a wicked enemy, are gathered up by the owner and patiently and lovingly put together and embellished with such art that the very fractures and flaws, not only are not seen, but add to it new gracefulness and beauty. Thus God does and thus it is fitting He should do with our body, broken and shattered by His enemy and ours; His wisdom, goodness, and glory all require that He should re-make this vase, the work of His

[1]Tertullian in his harsh and vigorous, but incisive and incomparable style calls our flesh: Liberalitatis suae heredem, molitionis suae vaginam, ministram et famulam animae, religionis sacerdotem, militem testimonii sui, cardinem salutis, Christi sororem, etc. (De Resurrect. Carnis, passim.)

own hands, which sums up in itself all the beauties of earth, more beautiful than before it was marred. The body, then, must rise again; either that or we shall be forced to say that the harmony of the universe will be forever disturbed and that God will have to contemplate in the scattered ruins of the human body His most beautiful work and the abridgment of all creation, the victory of the enemy and His own defeat.

Yes, the body of man will die, it will be shattered, its ashes will be scattered, because this is the will of the God of justice; but it will rise again and, being made incomparably more beautiful than it was before, it will take its appointed place, and thus will the bridge connecting matter and mind, that had been destroyed, be reconstructed, and the link of the chain, binding all beings together, restored.

Rise then, O body, live again, clothe thyself in light like unto the body of Christ, whose member thou art, and death shall never again throughout all the ages have dominion over thee!

Faith teaches us that the resurrection of the body is a fundamental dogma of faith, reason tells us that it is fitting and necessary, and now all nature, as we see it round about us, throws a new and beautiful light upon the same doctrine. I am following Tertullian, who sees the resurrection

foreshadowed in all nature and who with a magic pen draws out and illustrates the argument.

At close of day the sun sets in the west, and seems to sink into a tomb; darkness comes on and all is silent; it is the reign of death; but in a little while the new day dawns in the east and following the dawn comes the dazzling sun, the conqueror of night, like one dead rising full of life and vigor from the grave.

Winter comes on, and frost and snow, and the trees are stripped of their gorgeous foliage, of flower and fruit, and seem stricken with death; but when the soft air and sunshine of spring return, they again put on their mantle of green, clothe themselves with fresh leaves, buds and flowers burst forth, the promise of a plentiful crop, and they begin again to live a new life.

The seed cast into the earth dies, but in dying it gives birth to new life. The worm that crawls through the grass and dies is again reborn; and, with wings warmed with dazzling color and flashing with light, sweeps joyously through the air, going from flower to flower and from each drinking in sweet honey.

And still another worm, having lived out its brief life, builds itself a tomb of the delicate threads it draws from its own entrails and there takes up its abode, but in a little while it opens

its sepulcher and enters upon a new, a second life. Let us say with the poet theologian:

> Know ye not
> That we are worms, yet made at last to form
> The winged insect, imp'd with angel plumes,
> That to Heaven's justice unobstructed soars.[1]

Season succeeds season without intermission; one dies and another is born. Mountains little by little under the action of air and light, frost and rain, disintegrate and are carried by torrents to the plains below and thence by rivers on to the bottom of the sea, where they build up future continents, and the sea bed of to-day will be sometime in the future mountains and plains covered with forests and rich with harvests. Everything here below dies only to be born again, grows old only to renew its youth, falls only to rise. All this is but an image, a presage, of the renewal and regeneration of the body, that will be realized at the end of time as the Church sings: "*I await the resurrection of the dead. I believe in the resurrection of the body.*"

We have heard the voice of faith and the voice of reason; we have seen the images of nature, all demanding the resurrection of the body; let us now listen to the voice of the heart, the echo of nature and reason, and in a measure of faith also.

[1]Purgatory, c. x.

Who does not feel down in the bottom of his soul, in the very depths of his heart, a need, a longing, a powerful, irresistible instinct to live and live on forever? Who does not feel a cold shiver run through him at the very thought of death and of annihilation? There is no one who does not in his heart feel a longing to live; it is a yearning that wells up from our very nature, for it is common to us all; it is indestructible; it anticipates reason; it is strong and energetic even when the light of reason is quenched. Now this longing, this instinct, which is part of our very being, and which says in as many words: "I wish to live, I tremble at the thought of death, it appals me," appertains not alone to the soul, but to the entire man, composed of body and soul, and possibly more to the body than to the soul. St. Thomas, who faithfully interprets reason, tells us that the desires of nature are not deceptive, inasmuch as they come from God, the Author of nature. But if this longing, this instinct of nature is not deceptive, then there must necessarily be a resurrection.

A mother, her eyes filled with tears and her heart torn with grief, lays in the coffin her only son, snatched from her by cruel disease, covers him with flowers and kisses, and accompanies him to his last resting-place; she sees him let down into the grave and breaking out into lamentations,

weeping and sobbing, after the final prayer of the priest she bids him a last farewell.

A girl of fifteen is kneeling on the cold sod beneath which lies her adored mother. She has lighted at the head of the grave the mystical lamp and put on the grave fresh flowers, and raising to heaven her eyes wet with weeping, and joining her hands, she prays as only a daughter can over the tomb of her mother. Now go and say to that mother and daughter while they pray and weep: "You are foolish, you will never again see the features of your son and mother, never again will you hear their voice and clasp those dear ones to your breast. The end of all is a handful of dust." No, no, you would not be so cruel as to use such language, you would not have the heart to do it. They would reply to you: "We believe that our dear ones will rise, that we shall see them again, and that we shall live forever with them. Faith tells us this and the heart confirms it. *I believe in the resurrection of the body.*"

A few months ago nature was dead; frost and snow covered mountain and valley, field and meadow, as with a funeral pall. The trees stretched forth their naked and seemingly dried-up limbs; there was not a flower or a green thing to be seen; a cold frosty wind swept through and shook those boughs, now denuded of their mantle of beauty. All was silence, all was death. But

what has happened? Little by little the rays of the sun grow warmer, the air soft and tepid, the snows melt away, the frost ceases, the ice thaws, the sky becomes bright and placid, the earth takes on its mantle of green, the rigid and withered boughs grow soft and flexible, the buds begin to swell and young leaves to unfold, brilliant flowers of varied hues cover the trees and adorn the meadows, and all nature seems stirring, as if roused from a slumber and rejoicing in the gladness of its new life.

My friends, this is a living image of what will take place at the end of time. Then Jesus Christ, the Son of Eternal Justice, will appear in the heavens; the earth will be silent and deserted, a mere heap of ruins; and beneath these ruins will lie the bodies of the sons of Adam, either as skeletons or as dust scattered by the winds. The voice of Christ, the Creator and Redeemer, will resound through that silence; He will call all souls, those in bliss in heaven, or suffering in purgatory, or in agony in hell, and He will charge each soul to take again its body; and each will draw to itself and make its own those elements that compose its body, to which during life it mysteriously communicated its energy and on which it impressed its own image.[1] Have you adverted, my friends,

[1]It is not necessary that the soul should take again all the particles which during the course of life were vivified by it; the body

to that seed of which St. Paul speaks and which man sows? It decays, and is decomposed, and then it begins a second life. In that decaying grain a new force is developed which attracts to itself moisture and sap from the soil and the elements floating in the air, and drawing them to itself, in some inexplicable way, it transforms them, assimilates them, makes them its own, and thus forms its body. The same will take place at the moment when Jesus Christ, the true and eternal Sun, will flood the earth with His light and heat; all our bodies, like seed under the influence of the sun's rays in the springtime, will everywhere bloom and expand and will begin a second life that will never end.

But what sort of seed are these that blossom and flower under the light of the sun? They are living seed; the dead seed will remain there and be the food of worms. We shall all rise, says the Apostle, but we shall not all be changed. Which are the bodies that, under the light of Christ, will rise to life and will be beautiful with a beauty like unto His? Those which in the souls, to which they shall be joined, will find the germ of divine life, the grace of which Christ is the perennial fountain. Let us have within us, in our souls, this

would be enormous; it is only necessary that it take what is essential, and this God will know how to arrange. (See St. Thomas, Contra. Gent. lib. 4, c. 4.)

divine germ, this grace of Christ, and at His coming we shall rise and form part of the glorious and eternal aureola of that body, which was the first to-day to come forth from the tomb.

DISCOURSE VIII

The Risen Christ Adumbrates in His Own Person the History of the Church

"WHO is a Christian?" asks Tertullian in the daring and incisive style peculiar to him. "*He is another Christ,*" is his answer. He is one who in mind and heart, in thought and affection, in word and deed, presents in himself a faithful image of Christ: "*Another Christ.*" Any one looking upon a true Christian and listening to him ought to be able to say: "There is a portrait of Christ; He is Christ living again upon the earth."

If, then, all Christians, one by one, ought to be in their lives copies of Christ, how much more ought the Church, which St. Paul calls His body and His complement, be a living copy of Him? In the life of Jesus Christ, then, and most especially in its great mysteries, we can and should discover shadowed forth and outlined the life of the Church. Now the greatest mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ here on earth are those grouped about His passion, death, and resurrec-

tion; there is unfolded and completed the work which He came into the world to do; there the terrific duel between Him and the world closed; there came forth from His riven side the Church, His virgin spouse, which He wedded to Himself; and there commenced that life in the Church which was to fill space and time. In Christ suffering and dying, and in suffering and dying conquering and triumphing, we see in miniature the eternal history of the Church. The field that here opens upon us is a vast one, but I shall endeavor to touch upon the subject briefly. I shall try to do my part; do you also yours by giving me your attention, and the fruit you will gather, fruit especially applicable to the times in which we live, will be precious and amply repay your effort.

When the hour of justice and mercy, fixed by Jesus Christ Himself, had come, He, the Head and Spouse of the Church, voluntarily gave Himself into the hands of His enemies. In that poor assumed nature that was visible to the eye there lay hidden an infinite power, behind that vesture of flesh and blood there was concealed the very omnipotence of God, and this was not visible; it was so eclipsed and secreted that it seemed not to be there, for not only could it not be discovered by the eye of man, but the keen searching glance of the wicked one could not discern it. Had he known that it was there he would not have set the

mob and the powers of the world against Christ.[1]

And now that the enemies of Christ had Him in their power, what did they do with Him? You know; it is a familiar story; they dragged Him before the Great Council of the nation and heaped accusations upon Him. "He is," they said, "a violator of the Law of Moses; He is a false prophet; He is a blasphemer, for He has spoken against the Temple; He affirms that He is the Son of God, and is therefore worthy of death."

They drag Him before Herod and Pilate, and now they change the accusations. Before the Great Council of the Jews, an eminently religious body, the accusations are religious in character; before Herod and Pilate, themselves politicians, the accusations are political. "Jesus," said His enemies, "keeps the people, not alone of Galilee but also of Judea, in a constant tumult. He seduces and bewitches the multitude; He forbids tribute to be paid to Cæsar; He wishes to make Himself a king; He is Cæsar's enemy.[2] They

[1]The devil might have suspected that Jesus Christ was God, but this he did not know to a certainty until after His death. This is clear from the Gospel and from the Letters of St. Paul, and it is affirmed by many Fathers, and among them explicitly by Pope St. Leo.

[2]Strange to say, the leaders of the people accused Christ of the very crime of which they themselves were guilty, or rather they did not consider it a crime, but a duty and a title to honor. They detested and abominated the domination of Rome; they would have broken the yoke had they been able, and we know what they did later on. And yet they, who most bitterly opposed the foreign domination and made a boast of doing so among the people, made

bribe Judas, one of His disciples, with money to betray Him; they gain over the mob by threats and promises; by the angry and menacing shouts of the rabble they frighten and terrorize public authority, make it the obedient instrument and faithful executor of their will, and force it to pronounce upon Him sentence of death and the death of the cross. Having calumniated Him, mocked Him, scourged Him, martyred Him, nailed Him to the cross, and barbarously murdered Him, they get possession of the torn and disfigured body and give leave to have it buried in a tomb. Is this an end of the outrages they inflict on Jesus? No. They still tremble and fear in the presence of that body, which is in their hands. "That seducer," they add, "said while He was yet alive: 'After three days I will rise again.' The sepulcher must be guarded until the third day lest, perhaps, His disciples come and steal Him away, and say to the people: 'He is risen from the dead,' and the last error shall be worse than the first." And they set a guard of soldiers over the sepulcher.

As you see, the hatred, the rage, the ferocity of the enemies of Christ knew no bounds either of time or of intensity; they were His portion throughout His entire life and reached their cul-

this an accusation against Jesus. So true is it that hatred does not reason. They accused Him before Pilate of what they highly appreciated and esteemed a duty.

mination during His last days on earth. His enemies respected nothing that concerned Him, neither life, nor honor, nor death, nor even the majesty of the tomb. Against Him every weapon was welcomed—the most malicious insinuations, the most barefaced lies, the blackest calumnies; against Him they appealed both to civil and sacred authority, to the anger and the passions of the mob, to the national and religious sentiment, to the Law of Moses and to the laws of Rome. Now I ask: What wrong had this man done to stir up against Himself hatred so profound and anger so intense and ferocious? He had not done, and He could not do harm to any one; He had scrupulously respected every law, He had obeyed all authority, and He had enjoined upon every one else to do the same; He had cured thousands of sick and infirm, given sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, restored the maimed and crippled, healed paralytics, cleansed lepers, and even raised the dead to life; He had comforted the sorrowful, instructed the ignorant, fed the famishing; He had preached humility and purity of heart, forgiveness of injuries and contempt of riches, love of God and of our neighbor, and He had made this love the abridgment of all religion. How, then, and why could men so hate and barbarously persecute such a teacher and such a benefactor? How and why? Because He preached the truth; this

He has Himself told us: "Now you seek to kill Me, a man who have spoken the truth to you."[1] His offence and unpardonable crime was that He spoke the truth always and to all.

My friends, is not this the history of the Church from the day of her birth down to the present? Like her divine Head she comes before the world weak and unarmed, but she has within her an invincible strength, the strength of the God-Man Himself who said: "I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."[2] Just as the divine Word was hidden in Christ under the form of weak human nature and manifested itself from time to time in His works, so the strength and the life of the Church are concealed under the appearance of weakness and are resplendent in the struggles in which she is engaged and out of which she comes victorious, and in the superhuman works that she accomplishes and that are scattered in the wake of her passing.

Like Jesus Christ the Church has many, very many, powerful enemies, some in the lower walks of life and more still in the higher, who hate her, revile her, persecute her, and make war on her. But what evil has she done that she should have against her so many and such ferocious enemies? Like Christ she has never at any time or in any quarter of the globe done aught of wrong to any

[1]John viii. 40.
[2]Matt. xxviii. 20.

man, nor could she. She has been a loving and tender mother to all; she has only followed the command of Christ to preach the Gospel and insist upon its observance; she has made His work abiding upon the earth; she has extended and carried everywhere the benefits of His faith; she has lavished these blessings upon individuals and societies, upon rulers and subjects, upon body and soul; she is like the sun in the heavens, from whose rays and heat no earthly creature can escape. How, then, and why has this incomparable benefactress of the whole human family been made a mark for implacable anger and a target for the calumny of those who wish, many of them, to see her swept off the face of the earth? Because, like Jesus Christ, she always preaches the truth, and her lot here below can not be different from His, between whom and her everything is common. She comes before the people with the Creed, or symbol of belief, in her right hand and with the Decalogue in her left; to these she demands full and absolute submission of mind, heart, and hand, and from this duty she exempts none; she parleys and bargains with no one, and she proclaims that all must obey God and therefore must obey her, rather than men, even though they be men wielding the most absolute authority. This is why there have been in every age and in every clime distrust, envy, jealousy, anger, and

the most atrocious hatred against the Church; the forms may change but the substance is ever the same. It is the old quarrel between Christ and the Synagogue, which has been perpetuated down through the centuries and which will end only when they end, and the vicissitudes and the fate of each will be the same.

The Church came forth unarmed from the Cenacle, as Christ came forth unarmed from the workshop of Nazareth; unarmed she went forth into the world to gain souls, as Christ unarmed went up and down through Palestine and formed His first disciples; unarmed she battled with the enemies that surrounded her, pouring out the blood of her children in torrents, and conquered and triumphed, just as Christ battled unarmed, conquered, and triumphed, shedding not the blood of others, but His own. Let us follow the Church down along the great highway of the ages, which she traversed like an immense beacon of light, cleaving the dense darkness of the night.

Enemies, with ever-increasing rage and with ever new weapons, contend with one another in the mad rush to throw themselves against her; now it is hosts of Jews and Pagans, again it is the mob and the philosophers, and again presidents, kings, and emperors. The children of the Church are described as impious, immoral, seducers, and atheists, as devourers of infants, as guilty of un-

speakable crimes and participators in nameless orgies; as rebels, sectaries, enemies of the human race; as deserving of every punishment and as a pestiferous race. Such were the accusations and calumnies that were brought against the Church during the first centuries to effect her overthrow and to crush her; they may be read in Justinian, Tertullian, Theophilus of Antioch, Athenagoras, and other apologists who ably refuted them. In the fourth century the Church came forth victorious from her conflict with Paganism and during all the centuries since, down to our own day, the war has gone on; the methods and the weapons are indeed changed but the insatiate fury and rabid hatred are still the same. She has had for enemies heresiarchs and schismatics who have rent her bosom; the powerful, who have despoiled her; monarchies and republics, who have sought to make her their slave; and men of science, who have turned their weapons against her.

And what of our own age? It has sent out a call to the wealthy, the learned, and the powerful, it has formed them into an army, furnished them with every manner of weapons, inspired them with rage and hatred, and in the name of progress, liberty, equality, and the happiness of all, has bid them make war on the Church, oppress her and drive her from the face of the earth. She is, they

are told, the enemy of knowledge, she enslaves and impoverishes the people, flatters tyrants and their allies, stirs up the populace and incites the multitude against constituted authority. Hence is she driven from schools, from the army, from the courts, from workshops, and from all the abodes of sickness and suffering where it is her mission to enter; she is shut up in the Church; and even there she is watched and spied upon. Time was when the kings of the earth said to her: "We will protect and honor you and do you reverence provided you surrender to us a little of your liberty;" but to-day all the powers of the world brutally tell her: "We can do nothing for you; we do not ask your assistance, it is of no use to us; it is rather an injury; we do not recognize you, nor do we wish to recognize you, we can take care of ourselves." Then while proclaiming the absolute separation of Church and State, which, it should seem, ought to guarantee her fullest liberty, they weave about her a mesh of laws which embarrass her and bind her hand and foot. Some years ago a celebrated professor of a German university said:[1] "We must tightly bind the veins and the pulse of the Church and impede the circulation of life in her body, and then she will infallibly die and the victory will be ours."

[1] He was a professor of Leipsic; his name I can not now recall; but the words are just as given in the text.

This was the purpose of the laws passed in Germany and Switzerland during the great struggle which, it was said, was waged in the name of civilization; this, too, was the ultimate scope of laws passed in many other countries, both Catholic and non-Catholic, some of which are still in force. They wish to do to the Church what the members of the Sanhedrim did to Christ, whom they killed, whose body they wrapped in a winding-sheet and put into a tomb, against the mouth of which they laid a stone and sealed it, and set a guard of their desperadoes over it to watch it. These politicians, who are the henchmen of the sects and who admit nothing except what they can see, can not comprehend that in the Church there is a divine power, just as those who judged Christ did not comprehend that such a power resided in His humanity. When by their laws they have scourged her, stripped her naked, and mocked her; when they have nailed her to the cross, rent her body in a thousand ways, they fancy they have killed her and laid her away for good and all in the grave; but she has within her, as there was in Christ, a divine force or energy which, when it seems extinct, she exhibits in all its splendor; she rolls away the stone from the sepulcher in which they would bury her, leaves there the winding-sheet with which they would cover her, laughs at the guards, confounds all the devices of her enemies,

and reveals the full power of the divine life that she draws from her heavenly founder.

In our own times, not to mention things nearer home, we have seen the Church harassed and despoiled in the persons of her bishops and priests in not a few of the states of South and Central America;[1] we have seen her harried in France under monarchies, empires, and republics, conservative or radical or sectarian, as the case might be, by odious laws, drawn up with the purpose, if that were possible, of making her the slave of the government; we have seen three archbishops of its capital city either stabbed or shot to death by assassins; we have seen her in Germany in conflict with one, who was rightly called the man of iron, who ruled the destinies of the most powerful empire of Europe, and who once said: "Many have attempted to pull down the Catholic Church, but in vain; I now wield a power that I hope will enable me to succeed." We have seen her bishops and archbishops and priests banished, insulted, cast into prison, despoiled, and her temples closed; and we have heard this same terrible man proclaim it a crime to baptize, or to say Mass or to

[1]This is a matter worthy of note. The republics of South and Central America are all of Spanish and Portuguese origin and therefore Catholic; and all of them have more or less harassed and persecuted the Church. The Republic of the United States is in its origin mostly Anglo-Saxon, and hence Protestant, but it has never, not even for a brief period, persecuted the Catholic Church, although her members are notably in the minority.

hear confessions without his leave. We have seen this Church in Poland bound hand and foot by a barbarous legislation, made still more barbarous by the cruelty of the governors who carried it into execution. Shepherds and people were condemned to languish and die on the desolate steppes of Siberia, on the banks of the Lena and the shores of the Obi and not unfrequently bound to the altars in churches and done to death by the lances of the savage Cossacks. We have seen this Church bathe with the blood of her missionaries the deserts of Sahara, the shores of the African lakes, and the plains of China, Korea, and Tonkin. Hemmed about on all sides by powerful enemies, fettered by the meshes of insidious laws, devised for the purpose of making her the slave of the secular power, she has always been able to free herself from them and draw new strength and immortal glory from the persecutions she endured. Look at her at the present day in Germany and France, in England and Belgium, in the Americas, North and South, in the Orient and Africa, everywhere, and has she gained or lost? Has she enlarged or narrowed her boundaries? I leave you to answer. Within a few years her children have increased by many millions and her bishops by many decades; within the last thirty years her missionaries have been doubled and her magnanimous Sisters trebled; the spirit of her children has been

tempered anew; the prestige of the Catholic name is beyond all comparison greater than at any time in the past, and the moral power of the Head of the Church has reached a height unsurpassed in many centuries. She can lift up her head crowned with the glory of victory, and say to her enemies as Christ said to His: "If I be lifted up on the cross I will draw all things to Myself." Like Christ when He came forth from the sepulcher, she bears deep scars upon her body, but they shine like gems and add new luster to her beauty. Like Christ, too, she conquers and triumphs when most oppressed and outraged, and she says with St. Paul: "When I am weak then am I strong."

We, the children of the Catholic Church, owe a deep debt of gratitude to our enemies; by singling us out as the object of their calumnies, outrages, and persecutions, both by law and otherwise, they have taught us how to fight; they have compelled us to be constantly on the watch; they have made us realize the necessity of lifting our voices in prayer to God; they have aroused in us a full consciousness of our rights and our strength. Never before as in these latter-day conflicts, waged against us in every corner of the earth and in every form, have we so intimately and vividly realized the divine power that Christ diffuses throughout His Church, and the certainty of the

victory and the complete liberty which will be its most precious fruit.

One day I was walking by myself along a solitary road that led out into the country; when I arrived at a point where the road made a turn I saw on an elevation a young oak, whose vigorous branches rose gracefully toward the sky. A lot of boys were busily engaged about it, binding green withes, bits of rope and wire around its trunk, which seemed covered with these fetters. "My children," I said, "what are you trying to do?" They answered: "We don't want this tree to grow, we want to make it dry up and wither." I replied: "You are doing a useless work; that tree will burst all your bands," and I passed on. Two years later in going over the same road I arrived at the oak and stopped; I looked at it and saw that it had grown higher, more vigorous and graceful. I called to mind the boys, their efforts, and what they said; I went closer to the tree and searched for the withes, the bits of rope and wire with which they had bound its trunk. I did not find them; all I noticed was that here and there on the trunk might be seen some traces of where the bands had been. I looked on the ground among the dry grass and leaves and I saw broken bits of withered withes, worn and rotting ropes, and rusty wire. The oak was there full of life and vigor; it had grown silently, without ef-

fort, and without the aid of a friendly hand, and by its own inherent strength it had little by little cast off one by one and threw at its feet those feeble bands and ligatures, and its crest, rising proudly toward the sky, was flooded with light and sunshine.

Now you statesmen, ancient and modern, your suspicions concerning the Church are unjust and your fears ridiculous; you watch her every word and act as if she were your enemy, whereas she wishes to be a kind mother to you. You multiply laws and rules to restrain her action, abridge her liberty, and reduce her to impotency; your labor is vain and to no purpose; you are like the little boys whom I have mentioned, who were so busy in checking the growth of the young oak. Like that oak, the Church is full of life that comes down from on high, and she will grow, and grow forever in spite of your efforts, and one by one she will throw off your laws and break in bits the regulations you made and which you fondly believed would curb her activity or at least prevent her growth.

Go through her history age by age until you reach her cradle. Count the laws, the regulations, the decrees which republics, kings, and emperors, from our own day to the days of Nero, have enacted against the Church of Jesus Christ; they are countless. They fell to the ground one by one and

sleep in the dust of moldy archives, if indeed a memory of them remains; and those that still survive, do not doubt it, will infallibly fall as those before them fell, and the Church will stand erect and will go forward widening her conquests from end to end of the earth. She asks only one thing of all the powers of the world, and that is liberty —freedom of action. Will they give it to her? If so she will be joyful and grateful, she will bless them and use it for their benefit. Will they refuse it? She will tranquilly rely upon herself, and without parade or fear she will gather herself together and go forward just the same, scattering her blessings everywhere, even upon her enemies, for she is like unto Christ who died and rose for all; like unto God, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust.[1]

[1]Matt. v. 45.

The Mystery of the Ascension

DISCOURSE I

Commentary on the Epistle

THE former treatise I made, O Theophilus, of all things, which Jesus began to do, and to teach until the day on which giving commandments by the Holy Ghost to the apostles whom He had chosen, He was taken up: To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And eating together with them, He commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard (saith He) by My mouth: For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. They therefore who were come together, asked Him, saying: Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? But He said to them: It is not for you to know the times or moments, which the Father hath put in His own power: but you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth. And when He had said these things, while they looked

on, He was raised up: and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were beholding Him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven.—EPISTLE, *Acts i.* 1-15.

IN THESE eleven verses with which the Acts of the Apostles begin, which the Church directs the priest to recite in the holy Mass and which I have just read for you, St. Luke narrates the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven. It is a stupendous fact, and it is this fact which the Church commemorates on the feast of this day and with which the life of Jesus Christ here on earth closed. It is of this fact that I propose to speak and how can I better do this than by commenting on the sacred reading to which you have just listened? This is the subject of this Discourse, or rather of this Homily, and I beg you to give it your attention.

St. Luke was born a Gentile, possessed no little share of Greek culture, and was a physician by profession. He abandoned Paganism and embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ, mainly through the efforts of St. Paul, whose faithful companion he was in his journeys by land and sea and whom he followed to Rome, where he was when the

Apostle, shortly before his death, wrote his second Letter to Timothy.[1] St. Paul praises him and calls him *the most dear.*[2]

He wrote his Gospel as he had heard it from St. Paul, and in the Greek tongue, then very well known in the East and at Rome, and wrote it especially for the use of those Christians who had formerly been Gentiles.

After writing the Gospel he set himself to write the Book known as *The Acts of the Apostles,* and notably of St. Paul, for the second half of the Book is given exclusively to a narrative of his works, this being quite natural, as St. Luke had been his disciple and companion, and therefore a witness to what he narrates.

In beginning this Book, which contains an outline of the story of the first thirty years, he connects it with the Gospel he had first written. The Book is a continuation of the Gospel and gives an account of the first beginnings of the Church, and, as is natural, opens with a narrative of the ascension of Jesus Christ, which he had barely touched upon in the last chapter of his Gospel. He begins thus:

"The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, of all things which Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day on which, giving commandments by

[1]2 Tim. iv. 11.
[2]Col. iv. 14.

the Holy Ghost to the apostles, whom He had chosen, He was taken up to heaven."

St. Luke directs his words to Theophilus. Who was this Theophilus, to whom he also addresses himself in the beginning of his Gospel? There seems to be no doubt that he was a person of distinction, who had become a follower of Jesus Christ and whose life was an illustration of the name he bore, which in our language means *Lover of God.* He reminds him of the Book of the Gospel which he had sent him and in which he had given an abridgment of the works and the teachings of Jesus Christ: "*Which Jesus began to do and to teach.*"

This is what is meant by the Gospel; an abridgment or beginning of the things done and taught by Jesus Christ, from which it is easily inferred that in the Gospel the works and the teachings of Jesus Christ are not all recorded, but only the principal ones and the general heads.

The interpreters very properly remark that St. Luke, in giving in the Gospel an abridgment of the life of Jesus Christ, puts the works first and the words or teachings second: "*Which* Jesus began *to do* and to teach." First He did, and then He taught. And as a matter of fact deeds are much more eloquent than words, and men learn more from the former than from the latter; words cost no great sacrifice, but deeds very frequently imply

a very severe one. And, then, what are words worth if not accompanied by deeds? They are worth as much as foliage without fruit; and it is for this reason that Jesus Christ is said to have commenced first to do and then to teach. Let us imitate Him in this, that thus men may see our works and seeing them may raise their mind to God and give Him thanks.

"I have," says St. Luke, "in my Gospel given the record of the life of Jesus Christ from His miraculous conception until He quitted the earth, until the day on which going up to heaven He left His commands with the apostles and constituted them the executors of His will." What those commands were and what His will was is clear from the Gospel, where they are defined, "And bear in mind," adds St. Luke, "that those commands were given by Him, who, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost, does and says everything in virtue of that same Holy Spirit, whose fulness He possessed, and these commands and wishes He made known to the apostles whom He Himself had chosen and whom He Himself had taught by word of mouth."

It is not without a deep meaning that St. Luke, having named the apostles, adds these words: "*Whom He had chosen.*" The scope of the Book is to make known the works done by the apostles, and notably by St. Paul, and to bring out into re-

lief the organism of the primitive Church. It was therefore important that He should make known in whom the power to govern the Church resided and by whom it was given; and St. Luke tells us that it resided in the apostles and that they received it from Christ, who had chosen them. And this, my friends, is a truth that ought frequently be called to mind and insisted on in these days, when the tendency is to place the root of authority and power in the multitude. Whatever may be said of civil power, of which I am not here speaking, the power of the Church comes from on high, is derived from Christ, and from Him passed to the apostles, and from the apostles it passed to their successors and will so pass on until the end of time, because He chose them, and in choosing them invested them with that power which He received from no one, but had in Himself. "*Until the day on which He was taken up into heaven.*" And by whom was Jesus Christ taken up? Surely by none other than Himself, and by His own omnipotent power, since He was God and in all things equal to the Father, for the words, *He was taken up,* refer to the human nature He had assumed, and not to His divine Person, which, being ubiquitous and omnipotent, could not be said to go up or come down, and which to do either had no need of any force outside Himself.

The sacred writer goes on and in a single verse abridges the whole life of Jesus Christ from the Resurrection to the Ascension: "*To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion, by many proofs for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God.*"

The fact pre-eminent above all others in the life of Our Lord and the greatest proof of His divine mission is unquestionably the fact of the Resurrection, which, as St. Paul says, could not be either more certain or more resplendent. To remove every shadow of doubt He showed Himself to His apostles in forms the most diverse for a period of forty days. He showed Himself to the women, to Peter and to James separately, to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, to the seven on the shore of Lake Tiberias, to the ten, and again to the eleven gathered together in the Cenacle at Jerusalem; finally, when He went up to heaven He was seen by about one hundred and twenty persons;[1] and on another occasion, St. Paul says, without specifying where or how, He showed Himself to above five hundred of the

[1]St. Luke, after narrating the ascension of Jesus Christ, says that the apostles (and he calls all the eleven by that name) together with the Blessed Mother and the women were gathered together in the Cenacle in Jerusalem, and adds parenthetically: "The number of persons together was about a hundred and twenty." From the context it seems clear that all these hundred and twenty were witnesses of the ascension of Christ on the Mount of Olives. It should also be noted that the Hebrews in giving the number of persons never include the women.

brethren together.[1] He conversed with them, ate with them, and invited them to touch His hands and side to assure themselves that He was verily their risen Master, and not a shadow or a spirit. When we consider the length of time Jesus Christ abided on earth, the variety of apparitions and proofs He gave of His resurrection, and the number of witnesses to it, could any fact be more manifest or better attested? I appeal to you.

In all these apparitions Jesus Christ spent more or less time with the apostles and the others who were present, and naturally conversed with them. And what was the subject of His conversation with them? In going through the Four Gospels and in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we find some hints as to the subjects on which He spoke to them; but everything leads us to believe that He spoke and at length of all things that it was important for them to know concerning the exercise of the exalted mission that had been confided to them. St. Luke in a few short words hints at the subject of the instructions Jesus gave to the apostles, and which of course were to be the rule of their conduct private and public, saying: "*Speaking of the kingdom of God.*" What kingdom of God? Assuredly the kingdom of God on earth, that is, the Church, which is the preparation and the necessary means by which to enter

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 6.

into the kingdom of God in heaven and into life eternal. The sacred writer, while very briefly indicating the subjects on which Christ discoursed with the apostles, does not specify them in detail, leaving this to oral tradition. And this is a fresh and a strong proof of the Catholic doctrine, which holds that Sacred Scripture does not contain the whole teaching of Jesus Christ, but that this is to be had in its completeness and integrity in oral tradition. Will our Protestant brethren tell us what and how many subjects are included in the words, "*Speaking of the kingdom of heaven,*" on which Jesus Christ conversed with the apostles? And these, too, must have been subjects of the highest importance, first because they came from the mind of such a teacher; next, because they referred to His work by excellence, or to the Church; and finally because they were the last memorials He was to leave them. Hence the oral teaching of the apostles and of the Church must be regarded as not only a useful, but a necessary, complement of the teaching of Holy Writ.

In the next verse St. Luke tells us what was one of the subjects of these talks or instructions of Jesus Christ. He says: "*And eating together with them, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard, saith He, by My mouth.*" They should wait in

Jerusalem until the promise He Himself had made to them in His own name and in that of His Father, namely, to send the Holy Spirit, should be fulfilled.[1] And why should they wait in Jerusalem? Because there and not elsewhere Jesus Christ would that they should receive the Holy Ghost; because there, where Jesus Christ suffered and died, He would see the first-fruits of His sufferings and death; because there, where to the top of His cross the legend, "*This is the King of the Jews,*" was affixed in mockery, He would that His kingdom, the kingdom of all ages, should begin; because there, where Jesus Christ parted from His apostles, He would that they should receive the Spirit Comforter, who was to take His place and continue His work; because there, where Jesus Christ by His death had put an end to the Mosaic Law, He would that the Holy Spirit should proclaim the New Law and that from the heart of the Synagogue the Church should be born, for the Church was its goal and its term.

Having referred to the promise of the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles Jesus went to speak of its effects, calling that miraculous outpouring a *baptism,* and again a *baptism of fire.* "*John indeed,*" He said, "*baptized with water,*

[1]The *promise* of the Father in this passage is equivalent to the *One promised by the Father*, that is, the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son as from one principle, and hence is He said to be sent both by the one and by the other.

but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.''

Our divine Saviour said in effect: ''John baptized the people on the banks of the Jordan, and both you and I went out to him. What baptism was that? A baptism of water; of itself it did not cleanse the soul, but only the body. By receiving it you avowed yourselves sinners needing purification; it did not infuse any grace into your soul; it only excited you to desire it by kindling in you the faith which now I announce to you. You are now made clean by the power of My word; My grace abides in your souls and with it divine life. But the mission which you are about to take up demands a stronger force than this, a more vigorous and robust life, a new baptism, not of water, but of fire, and this you will receive within a few days.''

It is clear that in this place Christ meant by the baptism of the Holy Ghost the coming of the Holy Spirit and the transformation wrought in the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and He so designated it because it has a certain likeness to the Baptism of water. This is received only once, and only once did the Holy Spirit come down in sensible form upon the apostles; Baptism deposits in the soul a new life, which expands into the Christian life and imprints on the soul an ineffaceable mark; the Holy Spirit deposited in the

apostles a new energy, which expanded into the works of the apostolate.

And now let us go back to the narrative of St. Luke, which tells us of a question put by the apostles to Jesus. This question, while it shows the simplicity, and, I may add, the ignorance, of the apostles, also brings before them the divinity of the divine Master, and is a proof of the wonderful sincerity of the sacred writer: "*They therefore who were come together asked Him, saying: Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*"

In order to understand this question, which seems to us quite strange, it is necessary to know something of the ideas that were then fermenting in the minds of the Jewish people as well as in the minds of their leaders, and from whose influence the apostles were not wholly exempt. And it is all the more necessary to know what these ideas were, of which the apostles were the exponents to Our Lord, since they give us a key to the explanation of the terrible apostasy of the nation and of the catastrophe that followed upon it.

Go through the Books of the Old Testament and particularly through those of the Psalms and the Prophets; in many passages of them a Messias is promised and He is presented to us and described under a great variety of forms. True, His humiliations, sufferings, and death are foretold in

such way that the narrative seems rather a history than a prophecy, but He is also depicted as a most powerful king, as a victorious leader, a glorious conqueror, who shall snatch His people from the hands of their enemies, win back their liberties and extend His pacific rule over all the earth. What in fact happened? That which must necessarily have happened to a people proud of their independence, haughty and inflexible, who after the terrible struggles against the Babylonians and Syrians, from which they had emerged at the time of the Machabees, now fumed and fretted at being under the yoke of Rome. Self-love is even more characteristic of nations than of individuals; they have a natural egotism which may go to extremes. Among the Hebrews the hope of a liberator was deep and strong; their prophets foretold him, their rites and symbols represented him under countless forms; they looked forward to his coming and ardently yearned for him. Their gross nature, their longing desire to rid themselves of the yoke of the detested domination of the stranger, and their natural pride, caused them to see in the promised Messias, in the liberator foretold by patriarchs and prophets, a liberator of their bodies rather than of their souls, and to expect an avenger of their nation, a glorious David, a Machabee, a restorer of Israel, rather than a redeemer of the world. Since the Jews had formed

this strange and most false idea of the Messias, an idea that flattered their pride and responded to the sad and humiliating political conditions of their nation, it can be easily conceived how they received Jesus Christ when He announced that His was a spiritual kingdom and that to Cæsar were to be rendered the things that are Cæsar's, a doctrine that shattered the hopes of liberty and temporal greatness to which they had so passionately looked forward. This was the principal cause of the blindness of the Jews, of their repudiation of Christ, and of the ruin into which the whole nation rushed headlong. This is a terrible lesson and we see repetitions of it unfortunately among some Christian peoples. Why did the East at the time of Photius and Michael Cerularius separate from Rome and fall into schism and heresy, from which even to this day they have not emerged? The chief cause was the national pride of the Greeks, who thought it a humiliation to obey the Roman Pontiff and to be thus subject to the Latins. Why did the greater part of Germany cut itself off from the center of Catholic unity, whose seat is in Rome? The chief cause is again to be sought in national jealousy; the proud Germans, sons of Arminius, could not bear to take their law from Rome. Why did the English snap the bonds that for centuries had united them to Rome? Because they wrongly fancied that their

national independence was threatened. If we examine the matter closely we shall find that nearly all the great schisms and heresies that have desolated the Church have had their baleful root in an exaggerated sentiment or a misconception of their national dignity and greatness. It is a terrible trial for a people to suspect or to fear that their religious interests are antagonistic to their patriotic aspirations. Where this conflict exists, whether true or imaginary, there is great danger that the people will place their earthly interests before those of heaven, and that they will reject a church or a religion which seems to demand the sacrifice of their patriotism; and this danger will be the greater the more ardent is their love of country. Woe to a people who allow themselves to be so blinded. The example of Israel is before the world. Let us go back to the Sacred Text.

The apostles, although they were the sons of the plain people, rough fishermen, and had been born and brought up in the extreme confines of the nation, at the foot of Libanus and far from Jerusalem, the center of Israel, where the heart of the nation throbbed and where burned the fires of patriotism, nevertheless shared the common hopes of their people and were not indifferent to their aspirations. Man is born and lives a patriot; everything that touches the honor, the liberty, and

the greatness of his country ever finds a ready way to his heart; and if there be a man in whom love of country finds not an echo, such a one is but a miserable and degraded wretch. It was, then, but natural that the apostles, those upright magnanimous souls, brave and generous, though uncultured, should ardently love their country and share the common sentiment, and this impelled them to the fatal error of assigning to the Messias, and therefore to Jesus Christ, the mission of liberating them from the yoke of the stranger. And that the apostles were the victims of this prejudice, common to all and the result of a mistaken patriotism, and were so even down to the day of the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, clearly appears from the question which they ingenuously and a little timidly put to Him: *"Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"* The question, too, is put in such a way that it seems to have been deliberately agreed upon by them all and, as being a very important matter, was deferred as long as possible, in the hope that the Master would Himself speak of it without being asked, and it was expressed in terms that betrayed the anxiety and uncertainty of their minds.

What was the answer of Jesus? It was most simple, and you have already heard it. The divine Master allowed them to talk and He listened. He

did not give utterance to a word of surprise or to an accent of reproof because of their ignorance after having been so long under His tutelage, and this ignorance was all the more remarkable since it concerned the very gist and scope of His divine mission. How tender and charitable Our Lord was with His dear disciples! Though He saw that their minds were filled with serious prejudices, yet He was silent and dissimulated, and made no effort to dissipate them, knowing that they would not have understood Him. He awaited the time, not far distant, when the Holy Spirit would fill their minds with light, illuminating them and putting an end to their doubts.

This is a great and sublime lesson for us all, but more especially for us whose office it is to teach the people. How often do we meet with persons whose minds are filled with errors, who will not yield even to the clearest arguments, who can not lay aside prejudices that have been drunk in by them with their mother's milk, and who close their eyes to the most manifest truths! At times they are the victims of early education, of their surroundings, or of popular fleeting opinions that it is difficult to cast off. To oppose them sternly and face to face might be useless and even harmful, since it would still further rouse their passions and cause them to take refuge in an offended self-love. In many instances it will be better to

be silent, to dissimulate, to wait until passion cools and time teaches its lessons; and it frequently happens also that those, who at first stubbornly rejected the truth, finally themselves open their minds to it and receive it. The example of Christ proves this. He let their question pass, neither denying nor affirming, and gradually led the minds of His beloved apostles on to what was of more importance, recalling them, as was His wont, from the things of earth to the things of heaven, saying: *"It is not for you to know the times or moments, which the Father has put in His own power."* Which was all one with saying: "Why do you fix your thoughts upon the future destinies of the kingdom of Israel? You can not change them; they are in the hands of God, who knows them and will in His wisdom direct them. You are called to another, and a much more exalted and important enterprise; this is your business, give your thoughts to it, and leave the kingdom of Israel to Divine Providence." Now He had foretold and described in the most graphic language only fifty days before what would be the fate of the Jewish nation and of Jerusalem, its capital city, and His words must have been still fresh in the memories of the apostles. Had he not told them only a few days before His passion that a war of extermination would be waged, accompanied with uprisings and

tumults? Had He not clearly announced to them that there would be a terrible siege, and the city would be taken and the Temple destroyed, aye, that not a stone of it would be left upon a stone; and had He not bidden them to flee to the mountains so as not to be overtaken by that awful catastrophe? In that prophecy, so clear and so detailed, that could not have been forgotten, since it was quite recent, was contained the answer to the question: *Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* But it is not amiss to repeat that, when prejudices are deeply bedded in the mind, even the clearest and strongest arguments are powerless to root them out, and that it is wise to await the beneficent influence of time and experience, as Christ Himself did, who, ignoring a subject that was wholly human and had no present interest for them, went on to say: *"You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you."*

"The kingdom that is soon to be founded, and that, too, by your labors, is something very different from the temporal kingdom of Israel concerning which you inquire in your question. But how will this kingdom be founded and when? As soon as you shall have received the Holy Spirit, who will come upon you in a few days, filling you with a divine strength and transforming you into other men, you shall be made fit instru-

ments for such an undertaking. When you shall have been divinely illuminated by Him you will understand what sort of a kingdom I have come on earth to establish, you will understand that it is a kingdom of truth, a kingdom for saving souls, which shall begin here in Jerusalem, and from here it will extend into Judea and Samaria, the limits of the kingdom of Israel, of which you speak, and thence it will reach out to the ends of the earth.'' In this way Jesus Christ intimated the vast difference between the august and temporal kingdom of which the apostles dreamed, and that boundless spiritual kingdom which was to be set up by their labors, and by implication He replied to the question they had put to Him: *Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* And this seems the proper place to touch upon some points that seem important.

And note first of all that the order of the preaching of the apostles was clearly mapped out for them. They were to begin their mission in Jerusalem, and go from there into Judea and thence into Samaria; or, in other words, they were first to announce the good tidings to the children of Abraham scattered over the territory of the twelve tribes, beginning with the two that had remained faithful. Having finished their mission to the children of Israel, they were to break down the wall that had up to this time separated the

chosen people from all others and to throw wide open to all peoples indiscriminately the door of the new kingdom, the universal kingdom, that was to endure until the end of time. A more daring design than this, and, humanly speaking, one more impossible, was never seen and had never entered into the mind of man, and it directly wounded the pride of the Hebrew people, who were so tenacious and so jealous of their absolute isolation. The character of universality, both as regards space and time, which Jesus Christ in this place gives to His kingdom, was so utterly repugnant to the ideas of the Pagan world, and still more to those of the Jewish, that it is of itself amply sufficient to prove that He, who conceived it and so clearly announced it, was fully conscious of His own superhuman and divine power.

Note in the second place that Christ constituted His apostles witnesses: "*You shall be witnesses unto Me.*" To what were they to bear witness? To the facts and the miracles they had seen with their own eyes, and therefore to the doctrine of which these facts and miracles were the proof. The office, therefore, of the apostles and of their successors was and is to attest and to set forth continuously and everywhere the teaching of Christ, the basis of the certainty of which were the miracles wrought by Him. They are only wit-

nesses and therefore their office is to preserve pure and undefiled the doctrine of Christ just as it came from His lips, without adding to it or taking from it a single iota. And bear well in mind, my friends, that the Church, which carries on Christ's work, can not create a single new truth, and neither can she alter, or forget, or pass over a single truth of those that fell from His lips and from the lips of the apostles; she preserves them all and faithfully transmits them all, just as a polished crystal transmits the rays of the sun, although she may develop them and strengthen their force by new and fuller proofs according to the exigencies of time and place.

And finally you should never forget, my brethren, that the Church fulfils this double office of propagating and infallibly preserving the doctrine of Christ, not by her own inherent power, but solely by the power of that Holy Spirit whom Christ promised to the apostles and who, according to the same solemn promise, will abide with the Church until the end of time.

We may well believe that Christ during the forty days that He passed with the apostles spoke of other things, which are not recorded by St. Luke but which were religiously preserved in the oral teaching of the apostles themselves and of the Church. St. Luke, having given an abridgment of these things, goes on to say that Jesus led the apostles out as far as Bethania, to the

home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, near Jerusalem, and lovingly blessing them *He was raised up.*[1]

Christ, while rising on high by His own inherent personal power, lovingly looked down upon, and with outstretched arms blessed His apostles and disciples, and above all His mother, Mary, who was undoubtedly there, as is clear from the fourteenth verse of this first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

He was raised up, that is, He went up to heaven. That there is a place where God manifests Himself unveiled in His glory to those who have merited to see Him and live in His bliss, and which is called *heaven* there can be no doubt, and this the very nature of the angels and particularly of men, who are called to this abode, requires. But where this place is, this heaven, is utterly unknown to us. As long as men, relying alone upon the testimony of their senses and accepting the astronomical notions of Ptolemy, believed that the earth was stationary, that it was the center of all creation, and that the suns and the stars were of a nature incomparably superior to the earth, it is easy to understand how they could and should locate heaven in that place of delights, in that glori-

[1]Luke xxiv. 51. If the 48th, 49th, and 50th verses of this chapter of St. Luke be compared with the 8th and 9th verses of the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles it will be apparent that they were all written by the same hand and that he wished to connect the two Books together.

ous abode there on high among the suns and stars in the immovable heaven that was above all things. But when Kepler and Copernicus, and especially Galileo, changed the astronomical system of the universe, and when the spectroscope and the telescope revealed to us the heavenly bodies, their distances, their movements, their size, and their nature, the old prevailing conception of heaven seemed childish and the learned only laughed at it. The Christian idea of heaven, derived from the sublime conceptions of God and of His immensity, of spirits and souls and bodies in glory, still clings to the idea of a particular place, where God will reveal His presence and His glory, but it has never determined precisely where this place is, whether it is above us or beneath us, in the east or in the west, in the north or in the south. The Sacred Books are silent, tradition gives no key, and the Church, the infallible interpreter of both, teaches that there is a heaven of the blessed, a paradise, but where it is she has never said. And why might it not be on the earth itself? Heaven can be in any place where God reveals Himself to souls, and can not He reveal Himself to them, as He is, here on earth, the field of their combats and the scene of their victories, and therefore also the place of their triumph? What matters it that we can see nothing of all this? Who can see God, or pure spirits, or glorious bodies? Does not Christ

abide invisible on the earth in the Sacrament of the Altar? And where Christ is there also is heaven, whose King He is. The poet theologian has profoundly said that heaven is *everywhere,* and this is the true conception of heaven, according both to reason and to faith, and to this we cling.

But you will say: "It is still true that the Sacred Text in narrating the ascension of Christ describes Him as in the act of going up, '*He was raised up;*' and we ourselves, when we would point to heaven, lift our hands on high as if it were up there above our heads."

True, Christ in going to heaven mounted up on high, not because heaven was above rather than below,[1] but to show us that the term of His visible presence on earth had come to an end and that He was beginning another and a very different manner of life; and because with us the noblest and most excellent things are metaphorically said to be *high,* and we represent them to ourselves, not as something low but as something high; so also Jesus, to give us an idea of His new mode of existence in heaven, went up on high; for the same

[1]Every one understands that at the very hour when Christ was raised up and ascended into heaven, one on the other hemisphere, wishing to indicate heaven, would have pointed upward, above his head and in the direction precisely opposite to that taken by Christ on leaving the earth. And the same may be said of any other part of the globe from which He might have taken His departure. This is mathematically evident and shows us that heaven may be anywhere and that our way of expressing ourselves is purely conventional.

reason when we speak of heaven we lift our hands and eyes on high, as if heaven were above our heads.[1]

The sacred writer says that when Jesus was raised up *a cloud received Him out of their sight.* What sort of a cloud? Possibly it was a real cloud, or, as I am inclined to believe and as seems more conformable to the fact itself and to the majesty of Christ, it was an effulgence of marvelous light, issuing from Him, encompassing Him round about as a cloud and rendering Him invisible to His apostles, who following Him with their eyes, were, as we may conceive, filled with loving anxiety, ineffable joy, and piercing sorrow.[2]

And while the apostles stood there looking up and striving to get a sight of the Master, who had disappeared among the golden clouds of heaven, behold two men stood beside them in white garments who, as the apostles had their eyes raised on high,

[1]The same may be said of all other analogous scriptural, patristic, and ecclesiastical phrases, which naturally are adapted to our ordinary speech.

[2]How does rationalism explain the miraculous fact of the ascension of Christ? Jesus, the rationalist says, withdrew from the apostles and ascended a hill covered with trees; and that moment a small cloud passed over the spot where He was, and seeing Him no more they said, "Assuredly He has gone up to heaven." The two angels were two travelers, who by chance passed that way and who said they had seen the Master and that He had gone away. And this is the way these men explain miracles! This is the fruit, the ultimate production of modern criticism! It would be much better to deny everything outright, the Sacred Books and all historical testimony, rather than give us such an explanation as this, which is but a puerile jest.

came suddenly and unobserved. St. Luke does not say that they were angels, but this is clear from the context. He calls them men, because they were in the form of men, and certainly this is not the only place in which angels are called men in Holy Writ. When the apostles had recovered from their ecstasy these two angels addressed them saying: *"Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven."* The angels reminded the apostles of a truth, which they had often heard from the lips of Christ, that is, of His glorious coming at the end of time. The sacred writer indicates a similarity between the two events, the going of Christ into heaven and His second coming on earth. In quitting the earth and in returning to it Jesus always shows Himself in a cloud, denoting His majesty and His complete lordship over all things. When He was transfigured on Thabor the voice that was heard from heaven came out of a cloud, and it was through a cloud that Moses saw God.

We have followed Christ with mind and heart as He went up to heaven; let us prepare with mind and heart to welcome Him at His final coming, that so we may enter with Him into His heavenly glory and there be happy with Him for all the ages of eternity.

DISCOURSE II

Commentary on the Gospel

AT LENGTH He appeared to the eleven as they were at table: and He upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart: because they did not believe them who had seen Him after He was risen again. And He said to them: Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In My name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents: and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover. And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God. But they going forth preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.—GOSPEL, *Mark* 14-20.

EVERY mystery commemorated and celebrated by the Church is naturally reflected in her liturgy and especially in the Epistle and Gospel, which she directs her priests to read in the Holy Mass. And so also in the mystery or fact of the ascension of Our Lord which we celebrate on this day. It is narrated in the Epistle taken from the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which we explained in the preceding Discourse, and it is also narrated, but less in detail, in the last verses of the Gospel of St. Mark, just read to you. Having spoken of the fact as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, it seems only proper that I should speak of it as it is briefly related by St. Mark. And this I do all the more willingly since the two texts differ in many details from each other; moreover, as there are many points and truths found in the one and not in the other, I shall not be obliged to repeat what has been already said, which, while it might be useful, would be tiresome.

It is hardly necessary to say that this is not, as its title implies, properly a *Discourse,* but rather a Homily, for it is only an explanation of the Gospel text. But, whether a Discourse or Homily, what I am about to say is worthy your attention.

There are many apparitions of Christ after His resurrection narrated in the Gospel; He appeared to the holy women and to the apostles in Jerusa-

lem, then in Galilee, and again in Jerusalem; in fact there are in all nine apparitions; but these are related so briefly, with so little detail, and at times so differently, that it is no easy matter to arrange them in order and put each in its proper place. Hence it is not to be wondered at that, in spite of the zealous and patient labors of interpreters, there are still many details relating to the manner, the place, the time, and the circumstances in which these apparitions took place, that are obscure. But this, far from casting the shadow of a doubt upon the certainty of the fact of the Resurrection, rather confirms it, since the differences in the narratives are purely accidental and show that there was no previous understanding among the evangelists, that each recorded the facts just as he had seen or heard them, and that each wrote wholly independently of the others.[1] St. Mark's account is quite brief. Having spoken of the two apparitions of Jesus to Mary Magdalen and to the two disciples at Em-

[1]The fact of the Resurrection took place in a way wholly different from what the apostles vaguely anticipated and imagined. Instead of one solemn and stupendous apparition, which the apostles expected, Jesus preferred to appear often, in various forms, to various persons and at various times and places, and sometimes simultaneously or nearly so. Hence the apparent diversity and confusion of the evangelists in recording them. Of the nine apparitions recorded in the Gospels, and there were certainly others, St. Mark gives only three, and these very briefly. This will be clear from the fact that he condenses into only fourteen verses the whole account of the Resurrection. He merits the title given to him by St. Augustine of the *abbreviator;* still, as a matter of fact, St. Matthew's account of the Resurrection is still more brief.

maus he closes with the third and last apparition to the eleven apostles in the Cenacle at Jerusalem. And here begins the Gospel of this feast: *"At length He appeared to the eleven as they were at table."* St. John, being an eyewitness of the apparitions, writes more fully of them. Having described the apparition to Mary Magdalen, that took place on Easter Sunday morning, he goes on at once to narrate that which took place on the same day, the doors being closed, to the ten apostles in Jerusalem, when, as he is careful to note, St. Thomas was absent.[1] Thomas stubbornly refused to believe what his ten companions narrated to Him. Eight days later, St. John tells us, the apostles were again gathered together, most likely in the same place, the doors being closed, and Thomas with them. When, then, the evangelist St. Mark tells us that *at length He appeared to the eleven as they were at table,* he clearly refers to the second apparition, narrated by St. John, when there were, not ten, but eleven apostles present, and in this way the two evangelists are made to agree.[2]

The evangelist notes in this passage that Jesus

[1]John xx. 24-26.

[2]Here St. Mark says *Novissime,* or *finally* Jesus appeared to the eleven. We are not to take it for granted that this was the last apparition of Jesus; many were had after that eighth day following Easter. He says: *At length,* or *finally,* to denote that it was the last narrated by him. I do not deny that in this place the Evangelist, since he records the words spoken in the first apparition, may have intended to put the two together.

Christ appeared to the eleven while they were at table, and this appears to be the apparition recorded by St. Luke,[1] in which Jesus, to show that He was truly risen, said to the apostles: *"Have you here anything to eat?"* And He ate a bit of broiled fish and a honeycomb.[2]

But putting aside all these things, that refer to the order of the facts as given in the Gospel rather than to the truths taught by Jesus Christ, let us fix our minds on these words: *"Jesus upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart."*

We must divide into two parts the forty days that Christ lived upon earth between the Resurrection and the Ascension; the first part includes the first ten or twelve days, and specifically the first week. During these first days the doubts, fears, and uncertainties of the apostles were many, and some of the apostles, like St. Thomas, appeared to be inexcusably obstinate in refusing to accept the truth of the Resurrection; during the latter days and on till the Ascension the doubts and uncertainties of the apostles disappeared altogether and they firmly believed.

The upbraidings of the apostles for their incredulity and hardness of heart had reference to

[1]xxiv. 11, 12.

[2]These details, concerning the bit of fish and the honey Jesus ate, are noted by St. Luke as having taken place at the apparition to the ten, when Thomas was absent, and explain the words of St. Mark.

the earlier and not to the latter days of the forty, and they were particularly directed against Thomas. St. Mark tells us what occasioned these reproofs, saying: *"Because they did not believe them who had seen Him after He was risen again."* This observation gives us to understand that the rebuke for their incredulity and hardness of heart was not intended for all, but only for those who had learned of the Resurrection from others. And were they not culpable? Jesus Christ had often and with the greatest clearness foretold that He would die and would rise again, and had even specified the time. When then those, who had seen Him risen and alive, told the fact to their companions, they ought to have been believed, and not to believe them was injurious to them, implying that they were either deceived themselves or were trying to deceive others, and it was also injurious to Christ Himself, implying that He was a false prophet and unable to keep the promise He had made to rise again.

Jesus Christ, then, wished that the fullest faith should be given to them who said that they had seen Him and whom He had sent to announce His resurrection. It is then, my friends, a duty to give faith to them who are sent by Him and who exercise the office of His ministry. Now who are these priests of the Church, if not ministers sent by Christ, and whose office it is faithfully to repeat

His teaching? Believe, then, their words, if you do not wish to merit the reproof of Christ to those who refused to believe the statement of them who had seen Him.

St. Mark, omitting everything else, goes now straight to the command given by Christ to the apostles to preach His Gospel: *"Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature."* It is quite unnecessary to note that *every creature* refers only to rational creatures, or to the whole human family.

Here is a fact upon which we should fix our attention, because it is the only one of the kind in the annals of the story of the human race and brings out into full relief the character both of Christ and of His teaching. Christ, who had been born in the midst of Hebraism, and therefore in the midst of religious surroundings the most exclusive it is possible to conceive, and who had grown up among a people who regarded it a crime and a sacrilege to extend the promises made to Abraham to the Gentiles and to communicate with them, lays it as a duty upon His disciples, and such disciples, to preach His doctrine to all men without discrimination of any kind and without limit as to space or time, and lays this duty upon them just when His own mission was drawing to a close and when He was about to separate from them, and lays it upon them in such terms as

not to leave the shadow of a doubt as to the final issue of the undertaking; and the only means He puts into their hands to accomplish it, daring as it was and impossible as it seemed, was this: "*Preach.*" Any one considering with a calm and unbiased mind the scope of Christ's work, His command, and the language He uses must conclude that either He is mad or He is the absolute arbiter of mind and heart, that is, He is God. The result, which we see before our eyes and which is daily growing in strength and numbers, has verified His word. He is God, that same God, who hath made one of all mankind,[1] and is leading all men back again to the greatest possible unity, the unity of truth made common to all.

What a fact this is, my friends, which after nineteen hundred years is still going on and is being accomplished quietly, powerfully, and irresistibly under our very eyes!

Christ says to the apostles: "Preach My doctrine to all as I have preached it to you; there must be no material force used; you must depend for your success upon preaching alone and persuasion. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned.* By your preaching shall you carry the truth to the minds of men; this is your office and by the aid of the grace that I will invisibly pour

[1]Acts xvii. 26.

into their hearts they will receive it. If they are docile they will listen to your words and in so doing they will accept the truth that you preach; and if they do what the truth enjoins they will be baptized, for Baptism is the seal of faith, and by this sanctifying rite they will become children of a new family, members of a new kingdom, and thus be saved."

But how is this, O Lord? Is it sufficient to believe and be baptized to be saved? Are not works necessary as well as faith and Baptism? My friends, we must take the words of Christ, not separately, but as a whole; and woe to him who fastens upon only some of them and forgets the others. Such a one accepts only a part, but not the whole doctrine of Christ. Here Christ says that faith is necessary and that Baptism is necessary to salvation; elsewhere He says that whosoever will be saved must observe the law, put the teachings of faith in practice, and do works of charity toward his neighbor; that he who does not feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and do works of mercy shall be by Him inexorably condemned on the day of judgment. Take all these passages together and you will see that, if faith and Baptism are necessary to salvation, the works that are the fruit of faith and Baptism are not less necessary. And if Christ speaks in this passage only of faith and Baptism, and not of works,

it is because in insisting on the necessity of faith He is by implication insisting also on the necessity of works, since faith itself declares the necessity of works. When we say that a man lives by breathing the air, do we say that air of itself is sufficient to sustain life? Do we deny that food is also necessary? By no means.

And those reason no better who, arguing from these words of Christ, say that Baptism ought not to be administered to infants and to those destitute of reason, since He requires first faith and then Baptism: *He that believeth and is baptized,* and assuredly infants and those destitute of reason are not capable of faith or of believing.

It is evident that Christ in this passage was speaking of adults, who may not be baptized until they have first made a profession of faith. Moreover, infants and those destitute of reason in receiving Baptism do in a certain way believe, not of themselves, but by means of their parents, or of those representing them, and by means of the Church; and as they without any act of their will contracted original sin, so without any act of their will do they cancel it in Baptism.

And those, O Lord, whom the words of Thy apostles will never reach and who therefore can neither believe nor receive Baptism, wilt Thou condemn those? To condemn those who, through no fault of their own, have not received Thy faith

and have not been baptized would be the height of injustice and horrible to think of, and this Thou couldst not do, O Lord.

God has never done this, my friends, and never will. Those who, through no fault of theirs, have neither received the Gospel nor been baptized have committed no sin whatever, and will receive no condemnation, since it is unjust to punish one who has violated a law of which he is not culpably ignorant.[1]

When Jesus Christ told them to preach the Gospel to every creature and clearly to announce the reward that those who believed would receive and the punishment that would be inflicted on those who obstinately refused to believe, the question naturally arose in the minds of the apostles: "How shall we get men to put faith in our preaching? If they demand the proofs of the doctrines we announce, what shall we say? Are men blindly to take our word for truths that are beyond reason and impose upon them heavy sacrifices? What proofs shall we give to show that we are sent?

[1]It is proper here to distinguish between a positive condemnation to hell, and a simple exclusion from the supernatural beatific vision of God, or from paradise. The latter condemnation may be incurred without any fault, at least proper and personal fault; not so the former. Whoever, even without any fault of his, has not supernatural faith and is not baptized, or does not at least desire to be, is excluded from paradise; but only he goes to hell who is consciously guilty of mortal sin. What, then, will be the state of him who, without any fault of his own, dies without faith and Baptism? St. Thomas, speaking of infants, to whom those adults may be likened, who are in the same case, if this be possible, says that they will have a natural felicity.

Some such questions were in the minds of the apostles, and Jesus gave an answer to them in these two verses: *"In My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover."* In these words Jesus Christ gave to His apostles the power of working miracles, and, as will be seen, though the text for sake of brevity mentions only a few, the power was most ample. It is hardly necessary to observe that the power of working miracles, given to the apostles, was not to be understood as if so given that they might work them at pleasure, when, and as, and as many as they would, just as they might preach the doctrine of Christ, administer the sacraments, and so on. It was a power wholly extraordinary and was not to be exercised except where, and when, and as often, and in such way as it pleased God, and, as I think, most frequently without any forethought or will on their parts, but just as God moved and inspired them.

The history of the Church from the days of the apostles to our own is one continuous record of miracles, and to deny this would be not only stupid but impious. I do not say, excepting those of course recorded in the Sacred Books, that each and every miracle is equally well authenticated,

but I do say that to deny all of them, and even to cast doubt upon them, would be to do violence both to reason and to common-sense. Of course in the beginnings of the Church miracles were more frequent because, as St. Augustine says,[1] there was more need for them; but they have been wrought in every age, in some more and in some less, and they continue to be wrought in our own. I am quite well aware that the very word *miracle* brings a sneer of scorn to the lips of certain so-called learned men, who say with a shrug of the shoulders: "They are legends—pious frauds—superstitions—ignorance of the laws of nature—creations of the popular imagination, always hungering after the marvelous." A miracle, they tell us with a triumphant air, is impossible; science does not accept miracles, and even if it did, they have never been satisfactorily proven. This is the language of rationalism, and since this seems the proper place to speak of them, for here we are told that Christ in the most solemn way gave this power to His apostles, you will bear with me while I say enough firmly to establish the truth of the Catholic doctrine and to furnish you weapons to repel false accusations and dissipate difficulties.

My friends, what is a miracle? It is a fact that falls under the senses, that is indubitable,

[1] *De Vera Religione*, c. xxv.

that can not possibly be attributed to the forces of nature, it being either superior or contrary to them, and which therefore must be attributed to God, the Cause of all causes.

Is a miracle possible? And why should it be impossible? Can not He who has created all things and fixed their laws change the former and suspend the latter? Is the lawgiver subject to the laws established by himself?

But it is said: "If He suspends them or changes them He must change His own will, change Himself."

By no means. If this were so He could not have created the universe, nor could He now provide for its government. Moreover, the change which a miracle introduces into the laws of nature was foreseen and willed by God *from all eternity,* and hence a miracle is only making actual what was willed from eternity; the law is changed, but the lawgiver is unchanged. And do not men suspend and often change the natural laws by natural means? Do they not change the course of rivers, and direct the lightnings? Do they not ascend into the air with machines heavier than air? Do they not control the forces of attraction itself by the use of other natural forces within their reach? And can not God do as much? Can not the Creator, who has within Himself all the forces of nature, do what the creature does? Who would

dare deny this? A miracle in this sense does not imply any change or suspension of the laws of nature; they remain as they are, and God Himself does all. These learned men are a strange lot; they would subject God to His own laws and deny that He can in an instant cleanse the leper, set the lame and the halt upright, give sight to the blind, and speech to the deaf mute, and unite again the soul to the body whence it had gone out; all this and more they would deny to the God who created all forces and who created man and all that he is and has. A physician with his knowledge and his medicines can within a reasonable time cure a sick person, and can not God do the same in an instant by a single act of His omnipotent will?

But can we, who are so imperfectly acquainted with the laws of nature and its forces distinguish a miracle from a natural phenomenon? Is it not very easy for us in our ignorance to mistake for a work of God and a miracle what is in reality only a phenomenon of some occult force of nature?

If you suspect that what seems a miracle is only the work of nature, it is only reasonable that you should doubt of its being a miracle. A phenomenon that can be naturally explained is not a miracle. True, we do not know all the forces of nature, but that is no reason for doubting of a

miracle; it is only necessary to observe the fact as it actually takes place, and in doing so it will be easy enough to distinguish between what is the effect of a law of nature and what is the work of God. The laws of nature operate in a determinate way, gradually and by the application of the necessary means; God works without these means, or with means wholly unequal to the effect, and instantaneously. I can transmit my thoughts by telegraph or telephone, but I am always obliged to make use of the necessary means; a physician may cure a man who is battling with death, but he must make use of remedies and he requires time; now there is nothing of this sort in a miracle. There are no means or remedies used, or if they are used there is no proportion between them and the effect. Whether the effect be natural or supernatural, your reason and your knowledge must decide; a miracle is not believed, it is proved; and it is for you gentlemen, who are the representatives of science, to judge finally and decisively of the existence of a miracle.[1]

A body has been in the grave for four days and the smell coming from it indicates that putrefaction has set in. A man in the presence of a multitude, in which enemies are scattered among friends, bids the dead man come forth from the

[1]Of course I speak here of a miracle inasmuch as it is an argument for its credibility, and of learned men who do not take leave of their common-sense.

tomb; at the sound of that voice the putrefying corpse stirs, rises up and leaps full of life from the sepulcher. A man rises after being dead for three days; after having abided for forty days with His disciples He leaves the earth in the presence of hundreds of persons and in the full light of day, and solely by an act of His will goes up to heaven. Now ye men of learning, who call yourselves scientists, tell me: "Are these facts, which are most certain and undeniable, which happened under the eyes of numerous witnesses, who could not be deceived and who had no motive to deceive others, rather whose interest it was either to deny them or conceal them, can they be attributed to the hidden forces of nature operating just at that particular instant? If so, prove it; as scientific men it is your duty to bring to light these new and mysterious forces; and bear in mind you are not to take refuge behind the unknown and beneath the shadow of mystery and say: "The forces at work may have been unknown forces of nature." To you, who loudly proclaim the sovereign rights of reason and who say that you recognize reason alone as a judge from whom there is no appeal, a *may be* is a contradiction. There are the facts; they are undeniable; no natural force can produce them; therefore there must be another and a supernatural force which does produce them, which alone can

produce them, namely, God. This seems common-sense, this is the judgment of reason, which comes unbidden from every man who is without prejudice. Your doubts, your *perhaps* or *may be,* do no credit to your reason, which seems to be seeking the darkness where all is light.

"But how many miracles have had their origin in ignorance, fraud, interest, superstition, and in that craving for the marvelous which is frequently so characteristic of the multitude! All the religions of the earth are full of them! All peoples narrate and magnify their miracles; and these grow with the growth of ignorance and decrease as culture and intellectual progress advance. Hence it is reasonable to believe that when the human reason will have completed its conquest and reached the goal of its journey and its progress, then will miracles disappear from the earth as night fades away before the coming of the sun."

That many miracles have had their origin in ignorance, fraud, interest, superstition, and in that craving for the marvelous which is frequently characteristic of the multitude, I do not deny. But have all miracles, even the miracles of the Christian religion, had such an origin? Can you as honest men put together in one bundle the miracles of Paganism and Mohammedanism and those of Moses, Christ, and the apostles? Have

they all the same historical and moral character? Because bad money circulates with good would you call all money counterfeit? Because quack remedies are popular as well as the efficacious ones of medical science, would you proscribe them all? Because in histories and historical monuments legends and falsehoods are more or less interwoven with certain and well established facts, would you have the right to discard all history? You have only the right to separate the true from the false, the good from the bad, preserving the former and rejecting the latter. Do the same with regard to miracles; examine them, probe them, without prejudice and without preconceived ideas, impelled solely by the love of truth, and you will find that the miracles of the Gospel will be proof against the most searching criticism and that to deny them, or even to doubt them, is to outrage and do violence to that reason of which you are so proud. You will find that, if the progress of the sciences and of human reason will cause spurious miracles to disappear and render difficult, if not impossible, the invention and spread of new ones, it will confirm and bring out into fuller light the true miracles, those upon which rest the mission of Christ and the origin of the Church. It is said that the progress of science and of human reason will cause all miracles to disappear from the earth. Yes? They will accom-

plish that when, and not before, they have thrust out all idea of God from heaven and earth, and from the minds and hearts of men. As long as the idea of God remains in the minds and hearts of men, so long also will the idea of a miracle remain, for a miracle is inseparable from the idea of God, just as light and heat are inseparable from the sun.[1] Pardon this digression, already too

[1]Paul Sabatier has recently written a life of St. Francis of Assisi, which has gone through several editions. I will say for those, who may not know it, that he is a Protestant, or speaking more accurately, he is a rationalist in the fullest sense of that word. What a life of St. Francis written by a rationalist, and a French rationalist at that, is likely to be I leave you to imagine. Everything of the supernatural is eliminated, and only the natural remains; and since in the life of a saint the one is necessarily interwoven with the other, it follows that we have no longer a life of St. Francis of Assisi. What remains I am hardly able to say, except that it is only a kind of romance. It is a French romance after the style of the life of Jesus by Renan, of which it may be said to be a feeble copy. In form it is graceful, elegant, impetuous, after the manner of the French tongue; the style is sweeping and transparent; the images are vivid and brilliant and give to the narrative color and force; in a word, that combination of energy, charm, and elegance found in great French writers makes the book agreeable reading, and it is to be found in the boudoirs of fine ladies and on the tables of men who certainly have little familiarity with the lives of the saints. What the outcome of all this may be any one who has any sense can fancy. What he says of miracles in general will give an idea of the rationalism of the book (App. p. 401). "If by a miracle is meant either a suspension or a change of the laws of nature, or the intervention of the First Cause in given particular cases, I can not admit it. In this negation, the physical and logical reasons are secondary; the real reason, and no one need wonder at it, is wholly religious, a *miracle is immoral.* The equality of all is one of the postulates of the religious conscience, and a miracle, this favor of God, only brings Him down to the level of the capricious tyrants of the earth. All existing churches, some more, some less, by making this idea of a miracle the very essence of religion and the basis of all positive faith, are involuntarily responsible for that enfeeblement of virility and morality, which is so much complained of. If God interferes in this irregular way in the affairs of men, they can only hope to be as *courtiers* who look for everything from the

long, but it is not useless, and now let us close the commentary on the Gospel.

"*And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God.*" In these words the evangelist narrates the fact of the Ascension, and on this I shall say nothing, since in the preceding Discourse I fully treated of it.

St. Mark brings his Gospel to an end with these words: "*They,* the apostles, *going forth preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.*" Here he recalls the promise made by Christ to the apostles and already referred to, namely, to give them the power to work miracles. The promise, St. Mark says, was fulfilled, and we saw that God by miracles confirmed the teaching of the apostles, thus becoming a co-operator with them. Miracles, then, are the confirmation of doctrine, the seal of

favor of the sovereign." I have read many books in which the possibility of miracles is assailed and I thought I knew pretty nearly all the objections that are ordinarily urged against them, but I frankly confess that this one of M. Sabatier is wholly new to me. The religious difficulty! A *miracle is immoral* because it destroys the equality of men before God, transforms God into a capricious being, and puts Him on a par with the tyrants of the earth! He seems to be dreaming. Has not God, the Creator Himself, made men unequal in all gifts of body and mind? And does He not will the existence of authority in all its grades? And is not authority the negation of equality? Sabatier in what he says denies all Christianity and all revelation. If God is the Master of all things why may He not give more to some and less to others? Who can find fault with Him for doing so? *Miracles would make men courtiers!* This is surely something new. But enough, for it requires only common-sense to deal with such assertions.

God Himself. The teachings of Christ for the most part transcend the powers of human reason; how, then, can we accept them with absolute certainty? There are two ways by which we may come into possession of any doctrine whatever; one is by reason and by knowing the doctrine itself as it is; thus we know mathematics and many other natural truths; the other is by authority, and this is human if it rests upon human motives, and in this way we know innumerable truths, as for example all the facts of history; it is divine, if it rests upon divine facts, and such are the miracles wrought in confirmation of a doctrine, and this is precisely the authority of the apostles and of the Church. Rationalists can not accept and hold any doctrine whatever unless they have reasonable and adequate proofs for it. We have no human and natural, direct and decisive proofs for the truths of faith, nor can we have any, since our reason can not rise to such a height. How, then, shall we be able firmly to accept and hold such truths? We say to the apostles and to the Church who announce these truths: "Why should we believe what we do not and can not comprehend?" "Because," they reply, "we come in the name of God." Well and good; now how do you prove that you do come in the name of God? Here are the proofs—miracles—examine them; they are our credentials, given us by God Himself. Miracles

are exclusively the work of God, they are His word, and who may dare to refuse to trust the word of God? And thus, my friends, our faith in the incomprehensible truths of God is reasonable. Men of the world accept and execute the orders of their rulers when they see attached to them their signature and seal, though they may not clearly understand their meaning; we accept and execute the orders of Christ, His laws, and His teachings, though we do not comprehend them, when the Church, His faithful ambassador, shows us His signature and seal; and His signature and seal are the miracles wrought in His name.

DISCOURSE III

Why Jesus Christ Went up to Heaven and What is the Meaning of "He Sitteth at the Right Hand of the Father?"

The life of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel is one continuous alternation between greatness and weakness, between glory and humiliation, all which are wonderfully interwoven one with another, and this is as it should be. He was both God and man, and as God greatness and glory were proper to Him; and so also weakness and humiliation were proper to Him as man, our bondsman and pattern; and since God subdues and rules all things, so also should His greatness and glory finally exceed and absorb His weakness and humiliation, and all should end in the splendor of His incomparable triumph. And on this day, my friends, as you know, we celebrate the final triumph of Jesus Christ, His glorious ascension into heaven. That child whom His mother laid with her virgin hands at dead of night upon a bed of straw in the manger, that man who went up and down Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, sowing miracles as He passed along and scattering every-

where the word of life—now saluted as the Son of David and as the looked-for Saviour, and now insulted and blasphemed as a seducer and a false prophet—that man who expired on the gibbet of the cross, who was let down into the grave and after three days rose again, flashing with light and glory, having instructed His apostles in all things, quitted the earth, entered into heaven, and thus crowned the work He had come to do.

All the mysteries of the life of Christ are prolific of the highest teachings for any one who meditates upon them in the light of faith; and so, also, undoubtedly is the mystery of the Ascension, which we celebrate to-day and with which the life of Christ on earth closes. Let us, then, meditate upon it with docile hearts for a few moments, and that we may not go astray we shall follow a safe guide, namely, St. Thomas, the Angel of the Schools. Under his guidance we shall inquire why Jesus Christ went up to heaven, and what is meant by saying that He sits at the right hand of the Father. The answer to these two questions will be the subject of which I shall speak and upon which you will meditate.

If I should put this question to any of you who listen to me—"My friend, in your judgment which would have been preferable, that Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, should have remained permanently upon the earth until the end of time; or

that He should have departed, as in fact He did" —what would you say? I fancy that you would at once reply: "O certainly it would have been better for Him to have abided here for good! What a joy it would be to see Him and hear Him, as the apostles did! What a privilege it would be to go to Him, speak to Him, pray to Him, and worship Him! Then we should all believe in Him, love Him, and live holily. Unbelief would be banished from the earth, the triumph of faith would be prompt and assured, and Jesus Christ would reign peacefully over all minds and all hearts." Such is the answer you would give me, and I doubt not that if I asked each of you one by one you would all, and so would all Christians scattered over the face of the earth, give the same answer, and in doing so they would think that their answer was inspired by the purest love toward Jesus Christ and by a true love of souls. So true is it, my friends, that very often we are deceived by appearances!

Jesus Christ, who is wisdom itself, who disposes and wills all things for His own greater glory and for the greater good of souls, did not abide on the earth after the Resurrection but went up to heaven; and hence we must conclude that our longings, though good and holy, are not those that best harmonize with His infinite wisdom and were most for our good.

Let us examine the matter, taking as our guide the great teacher, St. Thomas.

The earth is a place of trial; it is an arena, a field of combat, and a place of exile; it is a plain, a desert, which pilgrims returning home must pass through; it is an ocean which must be crossed by all who seek a port in which to cast anchor and be safe and at rest. Heaven is the uttermost term of those who struggle, the final goal of wayfarers, the port to which voyagers are hastening. If the earth is the abiding place of mortals, heaven is the abiding place of immortals; whosoever has finished his course here below must leave the earth, as he who has finished his daily toil seeks the shelter of his roof and there finds refreshment and repose. Christ by His death finished His course and came to the end of His mortal career; He crossed over the tempestuous ocean of this earthly life, and it was fitting that He should enter into another abode, begin another life, and dwell in a place more fitting and becoming to Him, in heaven, the home of the immortal, of the risen and of those in glory. Let Him, then, enter into His kingdom, let Him go up to heaven, the only place worthy of Him.[1]

[1]Locus debet esse proportionatus locato. Christus autem post resurrectionem vitam et immortalem et incorruptibilem inchoavit. Locus autem, in quo nos habitamus, est locus peregrinationis et corruptionis; sed locus coelestis est locus incorruptionis et ideo non fuit conveniens quod Christus post resurrectionem remaneret in terris sed fuit conveniens quod ascenderet in coelum (p. 3. q. 57, a.l.).

"But if Christ leaves the earth and goes up to heaven He withdraws from His poor brethren for whom He came, and suffered, and died; He withdraws from them just when they are grappling with the enemy, when they are most in need of His presence and His voice. Why should He abandon them in their distress? Why take from them the ineffable comfort of looking upon Him? If He loved them as tenderly as He said He did, and as His actions proved, let Him abide with them; love yearns for the presence of the person loved, and this presence feeds and intensifies love."

Yes, all this is quite true, but it is also true that Jesus, in withdrawing by His ascension His corporal presence from His beloved apostles and disciples, did not withdraw from them the presence and comfort of His divinity; rather He left them His corporal presence hidden under the Eucharistic species, a sovereign solace amid the bitter trials of this life.[1] But is was moreover good and necessary that Jesus should go away, as He Himself said: "*It is expedient for you that I go.*"

Why so, my friends? Let us listen again to St. Thomas. Faith is the basis and the corner-stone of the edifice of our sanctification; by faith our mind, which is the vertex and zenith of our spirit, is illuminated by the light of divine truth, unites

[1]Licet praesentia corporalis Christi fuerit subtracta fidelibus per Ascensionem, potentia tamen divinitatis ipsius semper adest fidelibus (loc. cit.).

itself to it, and through it unites itself to God. Faith is the root out of which springs the tree that supplies us with the flowers of hope and the fruits of charity. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," and to him who has faith, living faith, all things are possible; he can move mountains and he has Christ dwelling in his heart. You know that the Sacred Books are full of the praises of faith and that Christ attributes to it the miracles wrought by Him, and salvation. "*Thy faith hath made thee whole,*" is a phrase that was constantly upon His lips. Now, as St. Thomas well says, faith can not be had with regard to those things or truths which we see and touch. When we see clearly with the light of reason or know things by experience, faith ceases and with it the homage which we give to God; and consequently the merit of faith also ceases; there is then the domain of reason and knowledge, but not that of faith. Now, say that Christ after His resurrection had remained in our midst in visible form, and that after twenty, a hundred, a thousand, eighteen hundred years He was still living upon the earth, and that we could see Him and hear Him, would our faith in Him and in His doctrine be a real faith, or faith at all? No, assuredly not. Faith would cease altogether, and in its stead would be substituted the evidence of truth in the presence of such a miracle, and this miracle would

prostrate our intellect and take away the liberty of denying it, and hence take away all merit that would come of assenting to it. In order, then, that our faith might remain intact and the merit of faith complete, that our love of Jesus Christ might be the offspring of faith, and that we might tread the ways of truth, believing firmly in it because of His word, thus offering Him a sacrifice of our proud reason, it was necessary that He should withdraw from us the sight of His glorious humanity and that He should quit this earth. Had He remained here below, visible to us as He was visible to the apostles, earth would have been lifted up to heaven and heaven brought down on earth, the present would have been confused with the future, the means would have been changed into the end, and a temporary abode would have become an abiding city. Christ once said to His apostles: "*Blessed are they who have not seen and have yet believed;*" blessed, because they gain merit for themselves and give honor to God. And in order that we might be of the number of these blessed, it was necessary that we should not see Christ, and hence He went up to heaven. His ascension is, moreover, a positive benefit to us, since having confirmed our faith by His resurrection and His many apparitions for forty days, He left that faith entire when He ceased, by entering into heaven, to be no longer subject to the light of

evidence.[1] Again, hope no less than faith required that Christ should leave the earth and ascend into heaven. Let us listen again to St. Thomas.

The object of hope is necessarily the unseen and the future; since no one can hope for what he sees and possesses, and hence the great Apostle joins hope to faith, saying: "*Faith is the substance or the basis of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not;*" that is, faith points out the goods God has prepared for us, and hope gives us wings to reach out for them and fly toward them. What are those goods of which faith is the basis and toward which it bears us on the wings of hope? They are in this life grace, by which we are made adopted sons of God, and complete happiness in the life to come, when we shall be blessed with His blessedness; this is the object of our hope. The ascension of Jesus Christ strengthens and completes this hope. It points out to us Jesus Christ, our Head, who to-day throws wide open the gates of heaven and is Himself the first to enter there. He takes possession of the kingdom that He acquired at the price of His blood, indicates the way by which we may and must follow Him, and from on high tacitly cries out to us: "Where I am you also shall be; I pre-

[1] Ipsa Ascensio Christi in coelum, qua corporalem suam praesentiam nobis subtraxit, magis fuit utilis nobis, quam praesentia corporalis fuisset. Primo quidem propter fidei augmentum, *quae est de non visis.* Unde ipse Dominus dicit discipulis suis etc., etc. (3 par. ar. 1, ad tertiam.)

pare a place for you, and then I will come and take you to Myself.'"[1]

Yes, in Christ, our supreme Head, who to-day triumphantly enters heaven, we, too, in a sense enter there with Him. To-day for the first time our poor assumed nature is seen in glory in that blessed abode, placed high above all angelic spirits. Does not this fact strengthen and revive our hope, yearning for that place of delights, and give us the assurance that the means will be adequate to reach the goal to which we aspire? How can He be sparing in assisting us, who has suffered and died for us, and who to-day goes before us into the kingdom of heaven and bids us follow Him, that in us He may complete His work?[2]

The Ascension elevates and preserves faith, nourishes and strengthens hope; this we have seen; it also bears our love on high and purifies it, as St. Thomas teaches.[3] Our heart is made to love as the lungs are made to breathe and the tongue to speak. Love is like a cord that the heart throws out from it and with which it lays hold on things

[1]John xiv. 3.

[2]Secundo ad spei sublevationem; unde ipse dicit: si abiero et praeparavero vobis locum iterum veniam et accipiam vos ad meipsum, ut ubi ego sum et vos sitis. Per hoc enim quod Christus humanam naturam assumptam in coelo collocavit, dedit nobis spem illuc perveniendi (loc. cit.).

[3]Tertio ad erigendum caritatis affectum in coelestia, unde dicit Apostolus Coloss. iii.: "Quae sursum sunt quaerite, ubi Christus est in dextera Dei sedens; quae sursum sunt sapite, non quae super terram;" ut enim dicitur Matt. vi.: "Ubi est thesaurus tuus, ibi est et cor tuum."

and draws them to itself, making them its own and becoming one with them. By love man may bind himself to himself and to all things round about him, visible and invisible. It is but natural that he can more easily bind his heart to visible objects than to invisible, since the former affect the spirit more powerfully than do the latter and powerfully attract it to them, and, moreover, man is so constituted that he obeys the senses rather than reason. God is pre-eminently invisible, and hence man can not lift mind and heart up to Him without an effort that is beyond his strength, and without shaking off the world of sense that encumbers him and binds him hand and foot to itself. Now Christ, by leaving the earth and entering into heaven, entering, that is, into an invisible world, a world of spirits, teaches us to detach our heart and free our spirit from love of all earthly things and to lift them up on high whither He has gone and where He abides. To-day in contemplating the ascension of Jesus Christ these words of the Apostle ring in our ears more than ever before: "*Seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth.*"[1] Man lives and is present there where the object of his love is; the sovereign object of our love is Jesus Christ, and

[1]Col. iii. 1, 2.

Jesus Christ has gone up to heaven and reigns there; in heaven, then, should be our thoughts and our affections; in heaven we should now live in spirit if we wish some day to live there forever with Him who is our life. To Him who lives with his thoughts fixed on high this world seems miserable and despicable; he barely touches it with the tips of his toes and he longs to leave it forever.

But you will say: "How can we, exiles upon this earth and constrained as we are to give our thoughts to the fleeting things about us, live in heaven with Christ?"

Listen: We have, or rather we bear about with us our body, as does that wretched little animal that creeps along the earth ever carrying its habitation with it; but we have also a spirit, which borne away on the wings of thought and love may freely roam where it will. We are shut up in the body and constrained to live on the couple of palms of earth that we occupy, but who can fetter the wings of the spirit? Ye, who are listening to me, are bodily seated there in the narrow space you occupy; but is it not true that in thought you can at this moment fly away to the mountain top, to the shores of the ocean, go into the desert, or rise up to the sun, and career about among the stars on the extreme edge of the universe? There is no power on earth, in hell, or in heaven that can chain your spirit, and say to it: "I will that you

shall remain there where you are in the body." Would you know, my friends, where your heart is oftenest and abides longest? It is where love is strongest, and whither this potent love draws it and holds it. Do you love gold above everything else? You will find that it is oftenest in your thoughts and exerts the most powerful influence over your heart. Do honors, dignities, and worldly greatness allure you? You will find that your thoughts and affections are ceaselessly pursuing their fleeting shadows. Do the base pleasures of the table and the still baser pleasures of sense dominate you? You will find that these are ever at your side, following you as the shadow follows the body.

Ye wives and mothers, often and often do you go down into the depths of your soul, searching for your thoughts and affections and as it were surprising them; where do you find them? You find them where your husbands are and, though invisible to you, you converse with them; you find them at the cradle where your babes are sleeping; you see them, look tenderly upon them, kiss, and bless them. Why? Because your soul is where your love is, though your bodies are far away. How true it is that in spirit we live where the object of our love is, as the Master says: "*Where your treasure is there also is your heart.*"

If all this be so, as faith and reason teach, why,

my friends, does our spirit with its thoughts and affections ever wander round about on this lower earth and cling to it? Why are we like the moor fowl that goes wandering up and down those pestilential marshes which are death to body and soul? Lift up your minds and hearts! Jesus has left this earth; Jesus, our life and our love, has crossed the threshold of heaven, has plunged His entire humanity into the ocean of light and purest love of the divine Being; let us in mind and heart hurry after Him; love is purest when the object is seen and heard, not with the eyes and ears of the body, but with those of the soul, and hence did Jesus say: "*If I do not go the Holy Spirit will not come to you;*" because, as St. Augustine explains, you can not comprehend the spirit as long as you insist on seeing Jesus with the eyes of the flesh. Let us, then, follow Jesus on high, into the world of spirits, and let us abide there with Him as Holy Mother Church sings to-day in the prayer at Mass: "Grant, we beseech Thee, O omnipotent God, that we, who believe that on this day Thy Only-Begotten, our Redeemer, went up to heaven, may in thought dwell upon heavenly things."

You see, my friends, what sublime lessons are contained in to-day's mystery, and how by aid of it we may, though still wayfarers on the earth, begin to live of the life and joys of heaven. But it is time to go on to the second part of my subject;

and inquire what is meant by the words, "He sitteth at the right hand of the Father," and in doing so we shall follow him who has thus far been our trusty guide.

Jesus Christ ascended into heaven *and sitteth at the right hand of God.* This is the precise and solemn formula that is found in all the Creeds and in very many places of Holy Writ, or, I should say, everywhere where mention is made of the Ascension: "He sitteth at the right hand of the Father." God, God the Father and each of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, has not, and can not have, either right hand or left, as He can not have feet or arms, breast or head. And how could that Supreme Being and most pure Spirit have a right hand or a left? We must, then, take this phrase, "He sitteth at the right hand of the Father," in a wide and metaphorical sense, as we do in the case of so many biblical phrases that relate to God, and which, taken in their rigorous and literal sense, could not be applicable to His nature. The reason for the use of this ordinary biblical and ecclesiastical language in speaking of God and of spiritual things, which we ought always to correct mentally, is, as I have so often said, because our nature requires it. Made up as we are of body and spirit, we can not form to ourselves a single spiritual conception, a single purely spiritual idea; the corporal element, the shadow of the

sensible image, is always mingled with the idea of the mind; and hence in reasoning of God, of the soul, and of all spiritual things our language is always imperfect, and must be continually corrected.[1]

What, then, is the meaning of *He sitteth at the right hand of the Father?* The word *to sit,* as St. Thomas says, may have two meanings; it may signify the rest one takes in sitting down, or it may mean his dignity as judge or monarch, as when he peacefully exercises his power or authority. In both senses it is applicable to Christ in heaven. It is applicable to Him in the first sense inasmuch as He is immortal and lives in eternal blessedness with the Father, and because His rest and happiness shall never be disturbed and shall never decrease. When you say that Christ *sits* at the right hand of the Father, *understand,* says St. Augustine, that Jesus dwells or abides with Him, as we say of a man that he dwells in his native country.

It is applicable to Him in the second sense, because He reigns with God the Father and with the Holy Ghost, and because from His Father by eter-

[1]I would exhort and beg preachers often to warn their hearers of this, and particularly the common people, for the need of doing so is greater than one fancies. The people are ever, without being aware of it, taking material views of things and giving to God the shapes and acts proper to man; nor is this to be wondered at; it is natural for man to do so. It is our duty, as their teacher, to warn them against it.

nal generation He receives all power and this inasmuch as He is God; inasmuch as He is man He receives in a special way full power as judge and king of all humanity, having purchased it with the price of His blood.[1] It is in this sense that Christ says in the Gospel that the Father has given Him all power in heaven and on earth, and specifically that of king and supreme judge of the world. Hence to sit at the right hand of the Father belongs to Christ as God, but still more particularly as man; as God, distinct from the Father, because He sits at the right hand, and is equal to the Father, since He sits with Him and the Father's glory is common to Him;[2] as man, because only as man could He have merited the honor of being king and judge of the humanity He redeemed. Neither man, nor angel, nor any creature whatsoever, may sit at the right hand of God; that honor belongs to Christ alone, who is both God and man,

[1]Nomine sessionis possumus duo intelligere, videlicet quietem . . . et etiam regiam vel iudiciariam potestatem. . . . Utroque ergo modo Christo convenit sedere ad dexteram Patris. Uno quidem modo, in quantum aeternaliter manet incorruptibilis in beatitudine Patris . . . unde Augustinus dicit: Sedere, habitare intelligite, quomodo dicimus de quocumque homine: in illa patria sedit, etc. Sic ergo credite Christum habitare in dextera Dei Patris. Beatus enim est et ipsius beatitudinis nomen est dextera Patris. Alio modo dicitur Christus sedere in dextera Dei Patris in quantum Patri conregnat et ab eo habet potestatem indiciariam sicut ille qui considet regi in dextera assidet ei in regnando (loc. cit. q. 58 ar. 1 et 2).

[2]Christus dicitur sedere ad dexteram Patris in quantum secundum divinam naturam est in aequalitate Patris: secundum autem humanam naturam in excellenti possessione divinum bonum prae caeteris aliis creaturis; utrumque autem soli Christo convenit (loc. cit. ar. 4).

and hence of Him only is it said: "He ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of the Father."

My friends, let us lift up our eyes to Christ; let us contemplate Him there in the bosom of the Father. Human nature, which He assumed, and in which respect we are His equals, to-day for the first time is clad in divine glory and all blazing with light. To-day for the first time the countless armies of heavenly spirits see in amazement our image within the divine essence, and bowing down adore it. What an honor, what a glory for us sons of the earth, to see our nature lifted up and set above all creatures! Contemplate it there bathed in the Divinity! Up there on high is the term of our painful and sorrowful pilgrimage; there our Head awaits us and there we also one day shall be forever, if we keep there our thoughts and our love, for it is in time that eternity must be won and in heaven will flower the good grain that we here sowed on earth. The sun that shines high up in the firmament attracts to itself the seeds that are sown in the bosom of the earth, and they open, and spring up, and lift their heads toward it; and so also we should raise our purest thoughts to the Sun of Justice, Jesus Christ, who to-day was welcomed into the highest heaven, and waft to Him the fragrance of our best affection, until the coming of that day when we shall be

transplanted from earth to heaven, where we shall be beautiful with His beauty, happy with His happiness, and shall live with Him for all the ages of eternity. Amen.

DISCOURSE IV

The Feast of the Ascension Teaches and Comforts Us

The Ascension of Jesus Christ, which we celebrate to-day, is the last of His mysteries during His stay on the earth and is a fitting crown to His life. By His incarnation He came from heaven to earth, by His ascension He went from earth to heaven, taking with Him the first-fruits of redeemed humanity and opening to us, His brothers according to the flesh, the doors of that blessed abode. Jesus from the height of the cross, taking in in one mental glance the days of His mortal life, the prophecies accomplished in His Person, and seeing His work, the redemption of the human family, completed, could cry out: "*It is consummated.* All is finished." To-day, if I may so express myself, Jesus Christ can with still greater truth repeat what He then said: "All, all is consummated; My mission on earth, the mission to teach by work and word, the mission of the expiatory victim and redeemer of all men, is finished and I go to the Father who sent Me. I have sown in the hearts of My apostles the prolific seed of truth and life, and I must go up to heaven and

send thence the Holy Ghost, who will make it grow and bear fruit, as do the seeds sown in the earth when vivified by the sun and watered by showers: *"It is consummated."*

While Jesus is going up to heaven, blessing the apostles, who follow Him with eyes full of love, let us recollect ourselves and meditate upon some truths which to-day's mystery suggests to us, and which will be a light to our minds and a comfort to our hearts. And to put some order into what I am about to say, I shall show you, first, how paternally kind and graciously good Jesus Christ was to His apostles before parting from them; and, next, I shall show you how Jesus Christ traced out the way to be pursued if we will be of His, and this is indicated in these few words: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" and, finally, I shall speak to you of the sweet and comforting joy we should derive from this day's mystery, in calling to mind the words of the Apostle, who tells us that the Saviour having entered heaven is there exercising in our behalf the office of mediator: *"Always living to make intercession for us."*

We learn from Holy Writ, and particularly from the Acts of the Apostles, that Jesus Christ after His resurrection remained on earth for forty days. What manner of life did He live during these days? There can be no doubt that His glori-

ous life began with His resurrection, but He did not always on every occasion so manifest Himself. His body bore all the characteristics of a glorious body when He entered into the Cenacle, the doors being closed; and again when He faded from the sight of the two disciples at Emmaus, transporting Himself instantaneously from one place to another; sometimes there appeared no difference, or a very slight one, between His manner of living and acting after the Resurrection, and His manner of life before His death; He abided with them, conversed with them, as friend might with friends; He ate with them, instructed them, reproved them and comforted them; so that it may be said that there was nothing singular either in the appearance of His body or in His manner of life. Why was this, my friends? Why did not Jesus Christ clothe Himself with light and glory as on Thabor? Why did He veil the splendor, that should have shone out from His risen and transformed humanity, why did He show Himself now as a pilgrim, now as a gardener, again as a stranger on the shores of the Lake of Galilee, and again as their former teacher? What was the reason for thus acting, which would seem wholly contrary to the condition of a glorified body? He so acted solely out of consideration for His beloved apostles and disciples. To men, who were still in the condition of wayfarers and still on

trial, encumbered, as they were, with their mortal bodies and unable to bear the flashing light of His glorified humanity, Jesus saw fit to show Himself in this manner and under forms, which, while evidencing the truth of the Resurrection, would make Him accessible to weak beings of sense. This is why the risen Saviour almost wholly surrendered His glory and assumed a more simple guise. In the Incarnation the Son of God, that He might draw near to men and teach them, made Himself man and hid His infinite glory under His assumed human nature, now and then allowing some rays to escape through it, thus revealing His divine personality; when He was risen He tempered the splendors, which otherwise would have radiated from His body, in order that the apostles might be able to approach Him, though at the same time He wrought prodigies such that they removed all shadow of doubt concerning the reality of His resurrection. Does not all this prove how thoughtful our blessed Lord was and how kind to His beloved disciples? He made Himself small with the small and, as if still mortal, mortal with the mortal, thus prolonging and completing His teaching. Had He appeared all gleaming with light, lifted up on high or in other equally extraordinary postures, might not the apostles have been led to suspect that they were the victims of some fraud or hallucination? How could they have

gone near Him, or quietly listened to Him, or spoken to Him, put questions to Him, touched His body and felt of His hands? When they saw Him risen for the first time they fancied they were gazing upon a shadow, a phantom, or a spirit, and they thought the women who said they had seen Him were raving.[1] What, then, would they have imagined if He had appeared to them in all His majesty and in all the effulgence of a glorified body? If at the sight of a flash of the glory with which His body was all ablaze, while He was still mortal, when transfigured on the mount, the three apostles were bewildered and overcome and fell with their faces upon the ground, what would have happened had He, after the Resurrection, revealed Himself to them in His glorified state?

If I may so express myself, Jesus Christ loved after His resurrection to be as simple with His beloved apostles as He had been before, to deal with them and converse with them in the old accustomed way, to view with them once more the familiar places, and especially those smiling hills of Galilee and those lovely shores of His own lake, where He had commenced to preach and where He had formed His band of apostles. It might almost be said that in the company of His faithful disciples He almost lost sight of His triumphant entry into heaven.

[1]Luke xxiv. 11.

His beloved apostles and disciples were wavering between hope and fear; and to assure them that it was really He, their old master, the crucified, the one risen from Golgotha, He multiplied His apparitions, appearing now in this form, now in that, now here and now there, and sometimes changing the witnesses, in order that the number and variety of His manifestations might increase their certainty. Do not men do the same when they wish to persuade others, who doubt what they say, of its truth? They state it, repeat it over and over, change the form of expression, add new arguments to the old, until they finally dissipate every doubt and fix the truth in the minds of those who resisted it.

The apostles and disciples, after the overwhelming tragedy of Calvary, were like sheep who had lost their shepherd; surrounded by wolves and dispersed by the sudden danger, they are at a loss whither to fly, and they rush hither and thither through the woods, not knowing what is to become of them. Jesus, the Shepherd of shepherds, had no sooner risen than He went in search of these stray sheep, finding some here and some there separated from the others; then He gathers them all together, now in one place and now in another, and repeatedly comforts them and prepares them for future trials. Standing in the midst of His apostles, after He had comforted them and made

them absolutely certain of His resurrection, He brings back to their memory the truths He had taught them and more fully explains them: "*Speaking of the kingdom of God;*" He *fixes* them in their minds, He tells them how they are to carry themselves in the great mission committed to them, and He explicitly foretells the conflicts and persecutions that await them in the world; but He bids them not to fear, for the Holy Ghost would instruct them in all things and He Himself would abide with them until the end of time. He is like a loving Father, who, when about to set out for a far-away country, gathers His sons about Him and gives them good advice and wise admonitions, not tiring of saying the same things over and over again, now to this one and now to that, and then to all together, and thus He prepares them for the moment of separation, that His parting from them may be less bitter.

I know some one may say: "Could not Jesus Christ, omnipotent as He is, prove in a single instant the truth of His resurrection, dissipate all doubts in the minds of His apostles, and flood them with light, so that there would have been no need of so much time to instruct them? Why not do in an instant what it took Him forty days to accomplish? And, moreover, might He not have committed to another the office of comforter and teacher?"

That Jesus Christ could have done all this, had it so pleased Him, there is no doubt; but He did not wish to do it, and in doing as He did He gave a proof of His wisdom and goodness.

If you go through the life of Jesus Christ you will find that He always conformed Himself to the development and to the forces of nature, and if at times He suspended and changed these laws, which He did, I may say, comparatively rarely and only when necessary, He did so to prove His mission. In the growth and development of His human nature there was no deviation from the natural laws; He toiled with His hands to gain His daily bread and He never made use of His omnipotence to supply His natural wants or to spare Himself toil, fatigue, and pain. He could in an instant have formed His apostles and filled them with all knowledge; but instead He labored and drudged with them for three long years, and you know what was the result. Why did He not, after the Resurrection, adopt another plan? Never forget, my dear friends, that God always follows in the supernatural order the ways of the natural, because these are more conformable to human conditions, require man's co-operation, and force him to exert his energies. Suppose that Christ had in one instant, by using His omnipotent power, taught and transformed the apostles; what would have been their share in the work, and

in consequence what merit would they have gained? The work would have been wholly the work of God, and they would have had no merit. Who does not know that Jesus could, if He would, have committed to angels or to other men the office of comforting and teaching the apostles? But He would teach them and comfort them Himself, since it was fitting that He, who had commenced the work, should finish it, and because by so doing He, to so many other proofs, added a fresh proof of His love and fatherly tenderness toward the apostles. May, then, Jesus Christ be ever blessed, who by prolonging His stay upon the earth after the Resurrection, became, as it were, a pilgrim here below and gave us another precious pledge of His boundless goodness.

St. Luke[1] tells us that Jesus Christ, taking His apostles and disciples with Him out as far as Bethania, went with them up the Mount of Olives, and there, stretching forth His hands and blessing them, went up to heaven.[2] This is a fact, my

[1] xxiv. 50; Acts i. 12.

[2] It is not surprising that rationalists should after their fashion have attempted to explain the solemn fact of the ascension of Jesus Christ. "When," they say, "the visions (i. e., the hallucinations of the apostles) of Jesus Christ became less frequent they had recourse to another explanation; they represented to themselves Jesus Christ entering heaven and sitting at the right hand of the Father, or as they said: 'He ascended into heaven.'" How can they prove that the apparitions became less frequent? How can they prove that the apostles represented to themselves Jesus Christ entering heaven? It is a fact and should be proved by witnesses; and where are those witnesses? How and why and when and by whose contrivance *did they have recourse to another*

friends, that is worthy of being noted, for it is not without reason that the sacred writer indicates the particular place where Jesus Christ left the earth and began His triumphant entry into the kingdom of heaven. The question naturally arises in the mind: Why should Jesus Christ have selected this particular spot as the one on which to take His last farewell of His beloved disciples and in visible form to set out toward heaven? There near Bethania on that Mount of Olives Jesus had often passed silent nights in prayer; there after praying He had commenced that frightful struggle which caused Him to sweat blood and which was an evidence of the mortal agony that rent His heart; and there He had entered upon His pas-

explanation and how did they come to fancy that Jesus Christ had gone up to heaven? And how is it that this idea or explanation has remained firmly fixed in men's minds down to the present day? The rationalists go on: "These words ('He ascended into heaven') were to many a vague image, an induction." Who says so? How do you know this, since the evangelists tell us that He went up to heaven and give the details of that event? This matters not, the rationalists go boldly on: "By others the words ('ascended into heaven') were translated into a material scene. They wished that, after the last vision, common to all the apostles, when He gave them final directions, Jesus should be raised up to heaven (as if this fact was not attested by over a hundred persons who had witnessed it). Later on this scene was amplified and became a full-fledged legend (and how is this bold assertion proved?); it is said that men from heaven, just as is done in contriving the most magnificent representations, appeared at the moment when the cloud received Him and comforted the apostles with the promise that He would return in the clouds, thus making a scene similar to that they had just witnessed. Tradition gives the summit of the Mount of Olives near Bethania, as the place of this scene, a spot that had always been very dear to the apostles." (Renan, The Apostles, c. iii.) It is certainly remarkable that this man, after more than eighteen hundred and fifty years, should, without citing a single witness or producing

sion. Those olive trees had seen the traitor, at the head of the ruffians of the Synagogue, approach Him; they had seen the traitor give his Master the execrable kiss; they had seen Jesus bound in chains and hurried along amid the darkness of that fatal night to Jerusalem, when the frightened apostles ran away. It was but fitting that that spot, so memorable to Jesus and the apostles and the witness of so many and such frightful humiliations and sufferings, should also be the witness of their joy and of the supreme triumph of the divine Master. Which of us does not willingly return in our happier days to the places where we have suffered much and where we have shed abundant tears? It would seem that

a single document, by a single stroke of the pen cancel this Gospel story, written by contemporaries, yes by eye-witnesses, men most worthy of being trusted, and should recast the whole of it after his own fashion. Whence does he get this story? From his own mind and imagination. But why reject the Gospel narrative, which, humanly speaking, has every characteristic of the truth? Because it does not please him. And why should it not please him, and why should he reject it *a priori*? Because the *supernatural*, that is, the *impossible*, is everywhere visible in it. But has he demonstrated that the *supernatural* is *impossible*? There is no need of demonstrating it. Would it not have been more *scientific* to have examined the fact and to have reasoned *a posteriori*, going from the fact itself to its *possibility*, saying, if the fact is *certain* it must be *possible*? To a reasonable man it should seem so, but this is not the reason of the rationalists. The Scholastics are also taken to task, and up to a certain point not without reason. It is charged that they constructed the world *a priori*, and right or wrong tried to accommodate facts to their theories, and that hence arose many errors and the necessity for many more. They should, it is said, have started from observation, as was done later on, and thus have avoided many and ridiculous errors. And why do not the rationalists tread the same path?

the memory of such places, by reason of the contrast of what we then were and what we now are, diffuses a sort of sweet joyousness through our being that impels us to revisit them and makes them doubly dear to us. At sight of that spot I can fancy that Jesus Christ and the apostles leaped for very joy, going back in memory through the recent story of their sufferings, now changed into unspeakable gladness.

Looking down from that spot they could see Jerusalem, and the Temple towering above the city; they could see the public squares and the streets through which Jesus had been dragged amid the savage cries of the infuriated mob; they could see the praetorium; they could see Golgotha, on the top of which amid agonies of nameless pain He gave up the ghost, and at its feet the sepulcher, where had been deposited and where had lain that body that was now glorious and filled with immortal life. What a scene! What memories! Those places that had been the theater of insults and agonies should be witnesses of His final victory and should aid in making His triumph glorious and a beautiful and tender memory.

And who are the witnesses of His ascension? Who are they who go with Him up the Mount of Olives, listen to the last words that fall from His lips and receive His last blessing? First of all there is the Blessed Mother, as is clearly stated

in the Acts of the Apostles.[1] Could Jesus Christ deprive His mother of that honor, of that supreme joy, that mother who beyond all others had tasted of the chalice of His sufferings and sorrows and drunk it to the dregs? After the mother came the apostles, then the disciples and all the believers who constituted His church in Jerusalem. And why only these? Why did He not bid the whole Sanhedrim to come to that mount, all Jerusalem, and all those who had been the witnesses, the accomplices, the authors of His sufferings and death? Would not His triumph have been more complete? Such are the views of us men, which we would wish adopted by the infinite wisdom of God; without adverting to the fact we ascribe to God the weaknesses of our own self-love. When we are unjustly humiliated, persecuted, and betrayed, we would have revenge; we long for a public and solemn vengeance upon our enemies; we want the whole world to see it, that thus our honor, or rather our offended self-love, may be rehabilitated. Such are not the counsels of divine wisdom. Jesus cared nothing for these small triumphs, these little revenges begotten of

[1]Luke (Acts i. 12 et seq.) says that after the Ascension the apostles went back to Jerusalem and remained together there until Pentecost, that is, for ten days, and he expressly says that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was with them. He adds that the number of persons together was about one hundred and twenty. From this it is clear that these hundred and twenty persons were present at the ascension of Jesus Christ.

self-love and very dear to it. He wished to give us a lesson by His example and to lift up our minds to higher and nobler ideals. The thought of crushing His enemies by a great theatrical triumph never entered His mind; He left it to time and the power of truth to open a way to their minds and hearts, and He knew that before a great while many would come to Him, subdued by the evidence of truth and drawn by the power of grace, but He would not do violence to the free will of any; He wanted only the homage of free minds and hearts. He allowed only those to be witnesses of His ascension who had shared in the sorrows and humiliations of His passion and death; it was a recompense that He gave them here on earth, and a pledge of that full and everlasting reward that awaited them in heaven. Of course this recompense was not refused to others who did not merit it, not even to those unworthy of it; they, who had seen the Ascension and were witnesses to it, could and should communicate the news to others and thus in a measure make them sharers of its benefits and of the joys of this last triumph, which was also a proof of Christ's divine mission.

Finally, the ascension of Jesus Christ reinforces and brings home to us another truth, which is the basis of our faith and hope, and which, although very familiar to us, it will be well to re-

peat, for it will strengthen our weakness while we are still in the midst of the trials of this life. The truth is that uttered by Christ Himself when He said: *"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?"*[1] The Ascension is the crown of the whole life of Christ; it is the triumph that followed the conflict and the victory; it is rest after toil; reward after labor; joy after sorrow; glory after humiliation. We know that from the first moment of the Incarnation the soul of Jesus Christ enjoyed the immediate vision of God, and hence was supremely happy; but this blessedness, this glory, was wholly interior; it did not appear exteriorly, and His transfiguration on the mount was but a momentary flash revealing the glory and felicity within, in order that with this interior glory and felicity might be contrasted and measured the unspeakable pains and humiliations that were heaped upon His humanity externally and that bore Him to earth.

The interior beatitude and glory, that necessarily overflowed into the humanity of Jesus Christ, because of His intimate union with the Person of the Word, were not and could not be the fruit of His merits, since these were anterior to any of His acts; but the exterior beatitude and glory of the humanity of Christ were a reward due

[1]Luke xxiv. 26.

to His merits, and hence these were His after death and shone forth in all their splendor on the day of the ascension. Now what took place in the Head should in fitting measure be reproduced in the members; Jesus had His external glorification after meriting it by the pains and humiliations of His passion and death; so also shall we possess our happiness and glory, but only after meriting them by the toil and sufferings of this present life. From the Mount of Olives Jesus went up to heaven, but only after having suffered an agony at the foot of the mount and after having borne His cross up to Golgotha; even for Him the glory of the ascension into heaven was a reward for what He suffered during His mortal life. Since then, my friends, all this is true of our head and model, why should it not be true also of us?

All of us, children of Adam and believers in Jesus Christ, yearn to be happy; we feel a longing need of being so; it is the torture of our souls. Having come from God we are eager to return to Him; while we live here on earth we are homesick for heaven; weeping in this land of exile we pine for our true country into which this day our supreme head, Jesus Christ, has preceded us. But let us not deceive ourselves, my friends; there is only one way to reach it, and that is the way trodden by Him, the way of suffering, the way of the cross, the way of Calvary. To hope to reach it by

another and less toilsome way is folly and an insult to Jesus Christ, for were there another He would have pointed it out by teaching and example. We therefore to-day, with eyes illuminated by faith, have seen Jesus Christ with His body enter first into heaven, and we who wish to follow Him up there and live forever with Him should with the apostles and disciples go down again into that earthly Jerusalem, pray with them in the Cenacle, traverse again with them as they did the long and sorrowful ways of exile and go over once more the route traveled by the divine Master, so that when our hour is come, as theirs came, we may be able to sing in His kingdom: *"It behooved Christ to suffer and so enter into His glory. If we suffer we shall also reign with Him."*

I told you at starting that the mystery of the Ascension not only calls to mind two great truths, but that it also affords us a most consoling comfort in the midst of the trials and distresses of this life, and it is worth while to see what it is.

Our divine Saviour on this day withdrew His visible presence from the earth and crossed the threshold of heaven, where He displayed all the glory and magnificence befitting Him to the angels and men who followed Him thither. Let us rejoice with Him on this day, for His triumph is our triumph. Where are the sons who do not re-

joice at the honors paid to their father in a far-away country, though it is not given them to be witnesses of them? Where is the people that does not exult on hearing that its sovereign has been welcomed with feastings and rejoicings by other nations? The honors given to the father throw a luster upon the children, and the welcome and feasting by which a sovereign is honored honor also his people. Where are the men who, on seeing the son of their beloved sovereign facing every danger, pouring out his blood amid the most excruciating torments, and giving his life, aye, and what is more valuable still, his honor, to save them from the horrors of slavery and make them free and happy, do not go wild with joy when they see him again alive and covered with glory? Jesus Christ is our father and king, the Son of the everlasting Sovereign; He suffered and died for us, and to-day He enters heaven in triumph. Why, then, should we not rejoice and exult with Him?

But the Apostle puts before us another and most noble motive, which to-day should fill us with gladness. Listen: "Jesus Christ," says the Apostle, "is the true high priest who with His blood placates the justice of His Father and reconciles all men to Him." The priesthood of Christ is eternal, as He Himself is eternal. He and He alone can save all who by faith come to His Father; other priests can save no one since they

themselves are sinners and need to be saved; and if they save their brothers, they do it solely in His name and by His authority. Hence Jesus Christ, the eternal priest, holy, innocent, unspotted, having nothing in common with sinners, to-day ascends up to the highest heaven there to abide forever more. And what is the office, which He began on earth and will continue there? Here it is: "*Always living to make intercession for us.*"[1] What a comfort to us! What a joy!

Jesus Christ is God and man; in His divine Person He unites two natures, the divine and human. He is that immense bridge that stretches from heaven to earth, that unites the two shores of the infinite and the finite, and across this bridge God descends with the fulness of His gifts, distributing them to angels and to men; and across this bridge angels and men ascend to God and unite themselves to Him. In His divine nature certainly Jesus Christ neither prays nor makes intercession, being equal to the Father and to the Holy Ghost, and the Lord of all things; but in His human nature, in which He is inferior to the Father and to the Holy Ghost, and in which He merits, He ceaselessly discharges the office of mediator and priest and prays for all: "*Always living to make intercession for us.*" During His stay on earth, from the very day that He was present in the spot-

[1]Heb. vii. 25.

less womb of the Virgin down to the instant that He breathed His last breath on the cross, He exercised the office of mediator and priest; He exercised it while He was suffering for men, while He was lifting up His hands and eyes to the Father, while He was praying *"with a strong cry and tears,"* while He was opening His veins and heart and pouring out all His blood, and while He was consummating the sacrifice of His whole self. Look upon this priest, this incomparable priest; He has taken His holy humanity, He has set it upon the altar; by His sorrows and griefs and sufferings for three and thirty years He has shed every tear and poured out every drop of blood in His body down to the very last; He has offered Himself to His Father as a victim of expiation and propitiation, saying to Him: "Behold the price of the ransom of My brothers according to the flesh." The features of the Father relax, a smile of joy lights up His countenance and in an impulse of love He embraces the Son and with Him embraces all the human family, united to Him and reconciled by Him. To-day this Son, in whom the Father finds all His infinite delight, because He is equal to Him, having in the Resurrection taken up again His humanity and made it once more beautiful, immortal, and glorious, presents Himself again to His Father in heaven; the countless armies of angels rush toward Him, ac-

knowledge Him, adore Him as their king and make the vaults of heaven resound with His name. The Father looks upon the Son, clad in His assumed human nature, looks upon the marks and the scars of the wounds, received in the terrible duel with the enemy, but now flashing light like rubies and diamonds; He looks upon those eyes that had shed such floods of tears, upon those hands that had labored so long at a lowly trade, upon that forehead pierced with thorns, upon that heart run through with a cruel lance, upon that humanity all bruised and torn for the salvation of all men and for His glory; He sees His Son there before Him all radiant with light and glory, but humble, reverent, and suppliant, not for Himself, but for His brothers, wandering over the face of the earth and daily grappling with the ferocious enemy whom He had conquered. In that glorious humanity of the Son there before Him the Father reads all the story of His life on earth; all His works and deeds are gathered there as in one picture; He comprehends the love which impelled the Son to make such a stupendous sacrifice, and He sees that the honor due to Him is rigorously infinite, and infinitely exceeds the offense received; He sees that the triumph of mercy is measurelessly beyond what justice demands, and taking His Son, His own Son and the Son of man, this head and priest of all humanity, to His bosom, He exclaims: My Son, ask

and I will give Thee as a heritage all the nations of the earth; the limits of Thy kingdom shall be the limits of the universe.

My friends, when I picture to myself Jesus Christ, my Saviour, who to-day stands before the majesty of the Father and shows Him His humanity, the victim offered for me; when I see Him stretching out His hands in supplication to the Father and imploring mercy upon me, "*Always living to make intercession for us,*" I no longer fear anything; I hope all things, and I love with all my soul, and cry out: "To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction, and honor, and glory, and power, for ever and ever."[1]

[1]Apoc. v. 13.

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PRINTED BY BENZIGER BROTHERS, NEW YORK

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